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ABSTRACT

This adult education curriculum, part of the Aprender Es Poder (To Learn Is Power) program, explores the themes of school success for Latino children, expands the work options and improves the working conditions of Latino adults, and identifies community issues. It is meant to be a resource for English as a Second Language Literacy and adult basic education programs. It provides guidelines for organizing for change and for forming alliances with youth, parents, teachers, and community members for social action. The book is designed to be a guide, and not a package to be used from beginning to end. Activities and discussion ideas are meant to provide opportunities for students to engage with the themes raised. The curriculum sections are: (1) "Educating Our Children"; (2) "Our Working Lives"; and (3) "Community Action." A list of resources includes books, articles, and organizations that can supply additional information. This curriculum is also available in Spanish. (SLD)

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Sabemos y Podemos:

Learning for Social Action

ED 445 165

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Adult Education Curriculum

English Edition

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Sabemos y Podemos:

Learning for Social Action

by Rachel Martin, Ph.D.

with

Alejandra Domenzain

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Dear Educators

July 25, 1999

Dear Educators:

Western Union and the National Council of la Raza have a tradition of supporting and contributing to the community on a national and at a grassroots level. Because we work closely with Latino communities, we know that many Hispanic adults are working hard to make a better future for themselves and their families. We also know that education is central to this effort. This is why Western Union and the National Council of la Raza created the *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action* curriculum to serve as a resource for English as a Second Language, Literacy, and Adult Basic Education programs, as part of the Western Union® *Aprender Es Poder*™ education program.

This curriculum is designed to empower Hispanics as they build their future. Whether addressing the need for improvement in the public schools, the conditions of their work lives, or the need for change in the communities in which they live, *Sabemos y Podemos* uses language and literacy skills, not as ends in themselves, but as a means to social action.

Since 1998, Western Union has invested more than half-a-million dollars on conceptualizing, developing, field-testing, and disseminating the *Sabemos y Podemos* curriculum, produced in partnership with the National Council of La Raza. We are proud of that investment, our investment in the individual, in our community and our future. Please join us in celebrating our dream of seeing the Hispanic community fulfill its potential, and take advantage of this unique curriculum in your communities.

Kindest regards,

Doug McNary
President
Western Union North America

Raul Yzaguirre
President
The National Council of La Raza

Overview and Acknowledgments

In 1998, Western Union and National Council of La Raza (NCLR) came together to plan a joint adult literacy initiative that would target Hispanic* adults. Here, the idea was born to develop an adult education curriculum that would help Latinos address important issues as they developed literacy skills. This vision led to the creation of the *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action* curriculum, designed to serve as a resource for Literacy, English as a Second Language, and Adult Basic Education Programs. It was produced as part of the Western Union® *Aprender Es Poder*℠ education program.

The curriculum was developed and written by Rachel Martin, Ph.D. in consultation with NCLR Coordinator of Literacy and Adult Education Alejandra Domenzain. The advisory committee included Aliza Becker, author of ESL curricula for immigrants; Andrea Nash, *Equipped for the Future* Staff Development Coordinator at the New England Literacy Resource Center; Marguerite Lukes-Jaimes, then Project Director "What Works" National Literacy Partnership at Literacy Partners in New York; Jeannett B. Manzanero, then Director of the Literacy AmeriCorps-Houston project, and member of the Adult Education Professional Development and Curriculum Consortium of Special Projects; Ted Hamann, Assistant Professor at the University of Georgia and former Director of the Family Reading Program at NCLR affiliate Harvest America in Kansas City, Kansas; and Nicholas LaVorato, Applied Engineering Products in New Haven, Connecticut.

NCLR education staff members Roberto Rodriguez, Raul Gonzalez, and Ariana Quiñones contributed to the pieces on bilingual and special education, tracking, and public school enrollment. The *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action* curriculum was reviewed by Naomi Ayala, NCLR's Coordinator of Curriculum Development, and edited by Yael Flusberg, consultant. It was translated into Spanish by NCLR education staff Irene Cuyun and Zelma Cosio, and edited in Spanish by Naomi Ayala.

Several NCLR affiliate organizations operating adult education programs for Hispanics in key geographical areas were chosen to receive sub-grants and serve as pilot sites for the draft curriculum. They were: Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans and Latino Learning Center both in Houston, Texas; Association House of Chicago and Elgin Community College in Chicago, Illinois; Spanish Speaking Unity Council in Oakland, California; Eastmont Community Center in Los Angeles, California; and Centro Latino in San Francisco, California.

* **Throughout this curriculum, the terms Hispanic and Latino/Latina are used interchangeably to refer to persons in the United States who are of Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Mexican, Central American, South American, Spanish or other Hispanic descent.**

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Note From the Author

Many thanks to Andrea Nash and Aliza Becker for their careful attention to the details of these lessons, and for the overall insight they provided.

A special thank you to Alejandra Domenzain for skillfully juggling all the demands of this project.

This curriculum is dedicated to my daughter, Nomi, and her friends.

Rachel Martin
July 1999

Rachel Martin works as a freelance trainer, writer/editor and curriculum developer. Her publications include ***Other colors: Stories of women immigrants***, a diversity curriculum for adult education programs and ***Haitian teens confront AIDS***. Ms. Martin was also the editor and project coordinator for ***Neighbors talk***, a collection of pieces by community members in Boston. She has an extensive background in training, community-based curriculum development, writing and publishing, as well as in teaching adult literacy, GED and ESL in community-based programs that serve the Latino community.

Introduction to Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action

Welcome to *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action* developed as part of Wesert Union's® *Aprender Es Poder*™ program. What makes this curriculum different from others you may have used lies in the definition of *poder* or "power." Here, power means using language and literacy skills, not as ends in themselves, but as a means to social action, whether this includes changing our children's schools, the communities in which we live, or the conditions of our work lives.

This curriculum explores the themes of school success for Latino children, expanding the work options and improving the working conditions of Latino adults, and identifying community issues that might range from tenant concerns to police harassment. It provides guidelines for organizing for change, and for forming alliances with youth, parents, teachers, co-workers, and community members who share a vision of a different kind of school, community, or workplace.

A Participatory, Inquiry-Based Approach

Sabemos y Podemos recognizes that the action which happens inside the classroom is as important as that which we create outside. The most vital contribution teachers can make is building a classroom in which students have an opportunity to bring their own wisdom to bear on the issues that concern them. When using a participatory approach in which each person's voice is heard, we discover that often we already know the answers to our own questions. Further, this curriculum is inquiry-based, meaning that everyone in the room identifies the issues to address, shares knowledge and expertise, and then structures an inquiry to root out the information still needed. Acting on that information means pushing existing boundaries. While that's never easy, it can be exhilarating.

The Teacher's Role

As a teacher, your role in this process is three-fold. The first is to facilitate the activities in such a way that relationships are strengthened through collaboration. Second is to create an atmosphere that encourages students to take risks, with their ideas and with their developing language and literacy skills. Finally, you want to ensure that everyone's voice is heard.

Sabemos y Podemos is filled with ideas to help you in these tasks. ("Facilitating Rich Discussions," the section following this introduction, will also help.) Know up front that you won't, and can't, have all the answers to the questions students raise. In fact, one of the most important things you can do is *join* the inquiry process. Share your own questions. Be an active participant in each activity. You needn't have engaged in social action yourself. All you need is a commitment to progressive change in the world.

If all of this sounds heavy, don't worry! Just be sure to nourish the humor that will naturally emerge as we talk about ourselves and this crazy world we live in.

Expect some tension to arise at times. It's possible that something someone believes very deeply will be challenged. You might ask people what they think of when they think of conflict. Many will talk about conflict negatively. Let them know that *Sabemos y Podemos* offers strategies for encouraging everyone to say what's on his or her mind, and test it against each other's ideas and new information. This process helps all of us consider, for ourselves, what we really believe.

The teacher's chief ally in all this is trust in the students involved, and in the group process itself. Teacher Nancy Aronoff (1990) put it well when she described a curriculum unit she implemented on AIDS. "I . . . decided that if something happened in the classroom that I didn't know how to deal with, either somebody else would or somebody else wouldn't, and either way was fine. I didn't have all the answers, and I didn't need to. I didn't learn that one overnight. It took me a while, but once I got it, that knowledge gave me the room to have faith in other people and let things happen."

Beginners? Intermediate? Advanced? Moving Beyond "Skill Levels"

Adult education teachers will often say that their particular classroom is difficult because it is a "multi-level" one. The truth is, uni-level classrooms don't exist. And the students themselves are hard to categorize. Adults in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms are almost always able to use language and literacy in more complex ways than we give them credit for. *Sabemos y Podemos* is tailored for classrooms with diverse student abilities and interests. For example, *Sabemos y Podemos* invites you to ask even those students you believe are incapable of writing, to write. The key is that the curriculum provides a compelling *reason* to write, and then provides the tools. It also presents readings that may, at first glance, seem too challenging for your students. But the readings are accompanied by strategies that help make the content accessible and meaningful. They are also presented in an inherently motivating context—the readings are meant to help you and your students dig into the issues you care most about. As one teacher noted, "I always used to feel like, I hope this reading, this difficulty here or there, doesn't make them feel uncomfortable, doesn't make them want to leave class. I really need to let that resistance go a little and provide *techniques and strategies* more than ease." Please be sure to read "Notes on the Uses of Writing" and "Vocabulary and Class Readings," both of which follow this introduction.

Adapting Lessons

Any guide or textbook should only be used as a starting point and a source of ideas. Every situation is different and only you know the kinds of activities and experiences that are likely to work best with your students. Keep in mind that within the same student group, students' ages, backgrounds, and past school experiences may vary widely and that they may be at different operating levels. It's important to review the content of each lesson to see if it is appropriate for the students in your group, and make adjustments accordingly. Reading the whole unit before presenting it will enable you to focus on which activities will work exactly as they are, and which may need to be modified to meet specific needs. As you begin each lesson, remember to ask yourself where it fits or doesn't fit your students, since the makeup of the group may change throughout the year.

Some of this knowledge comes through experience. You will make some mistakes the first time through and students may have difficulty with an activity. Don't use this as a reason to give up or not challenge your students. Use these mistakes to learn how to adapt and change the activities so they will be better the next time.

While most of the lessons assume that students are literate (whether in their native language or in English), activities can always be adapted for students who are pre-literate. If you have low-literate or pre-literate students, you may need to recruit an assistant or volunteer to help with the group. For these students, lessons need to consist of concrete experiences, with the instructors demonstrating how to do things rather than giving abstract verbal or written directions. Hands-on experiences and oral language activities are more appropriate for pre-literate students than those based on more demanding reading and writing proficiency.

Classroom Techniques for English Language Learners

1. **Increase wait time.**
   Give your students time to think and process the information before you rush in with answers. A student may know the answers, but need a little more processing time in order to say it in English.

2. **Respond to the message.**
   If a student has the correct answer and you can understand it, don't correct his or her grammar. The exact word and correct grammatical response will develop with time. Instead, repeat his or her answer, putting it into standard English, and let the student know that you are pleased with his or her response.

3. **Simplify your language.**
   Speak directly to the student, emphasizing important nouns and verbs, and using as few extra words as possible. Don't use idiomatic or slang expressions. Repetition and speaking louder doesn't help; rephrasing, accompanied by body language does.

4. **Don't force reticent students to speak.**
   Instead, give the student an opportunity to demonstrate his or her comprehension and knowledge through body actions, drawing pictures, manipulating objects, or pointing.

5. **Demonstrate; use manipulatives.**
   Whenever possible, accompany your message with gestures, pictures, and objects that help get the meaning across. Use a variety of different pictures or objects for the same idea. Give an immediate context for new words.

6. **Make use of all senses.**
   Give students a chance to touch things, to listen to sounds, even to smell and taste when possible. Talk about the words that describe these senses as the student physically experiences something. Write new words as well as say them.

7. **Pair or group students with native speakers.**
   Much of a student's language learning comes from interacting with his/her peers. Give your students tasks to complete that require interaction of each member of the group, but arrange it so that the student has linguistically easier tasks. Utilize cooperative learning techniques in a student-centered classroom.

8. **Adapt the materials.**
   Don't "water down" the content. Rather, make the concepts more accessible and comprehensible by adding pictures, charts, maps, time-lines, and diagrams, in addition to simplifying the language.

9. **Increase your knowledge.**
   Learn as much as you can about the language and culture of your students. Go to movies, read books, look at pictures of the countries. Keep the similarities and differences in mind and then check your knowledge by asking your students whether they agree with your impressions. Learn as much of the student's language as you can; even a few words help. Widen your own world view; think of alternative ways to reach the goals you have for your class.

10. **Build on the student's prior knowledge.**
    Find out as much as you can about how and what a student learned in his or her country. Then try to make a connection between the ideas and concepts you are teaching and the student's prior knowledge or previous way of being taught. Encourage the students to point out differences and connect similarities.

Source: P. Sullivan, *ESL in Context*. Corwin Press. 1992.

Equipped for the Future Standards for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

With its emphasis on ESL students' roles as parents and family members, workers, and community members, Equipped for the Future Standards for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning (EFF) were fundamental in the development of *Sabemos y Podemos*. EFF encourages students to articulate their goals and purposes, choose activities that will help them achieve them, and identify the skills they need to develop. It enlarges the essential content of adult education beyond the five basic skills traditionally taught (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and math). EFF's standards include four basic categories of skills adults need to draw from to carry out activities central to their primary roles. Within these categories are sixteen additional generative skills. They are:

Communication Skills

- Read with understanding
- Convey ideas in writing
- Speak so others can understand
- Listen actively
- Observe critically

Interpersonal Skills

- Guide others
- Cooperate with others
- Advocate and influence
- Resolve conflict and negotiate

Decision-Making Skills

- Plan
- Solve problems and make decisions
- Use mathematics in problem solving and communication

Life-long Learning Skills

- Use information and communications technology
- Learn through research
- Reflect and evaluate
- Take responsibility for learning

Nobody is an expert in all of these. The list is meant to serve as a reminder to strengthen each of these skill areas when we have the opportunity. The EFF approach gives primacy to building these skills in a variety of real-life applications. Each lesson in *Sabemos y Podemos* highlights one or more of these skills.

Using Spanish in an ESL Classroom

There are several good reasons to practice written and spoken bilingualism in ESL classrooms. That native language literacy enhances the acquisition of second language literacy is, by now, well documented. The authors *of Talking Shop: A Curriculum Sourcebook for Participatory Adult ESL* (1992) point out one of the most significant reasons to use spoken Spanish. "Our experience has shown us that, contrary to what some people fear—that learners will use the common language to avoid English practice—many experiment *more* freely with English because they know that, if they get stuck, they can still express themselves in their own tongue. . . . Without this option, the class is often dominated by the more confident learners, while others become passive observers." As the authors *of Talking Shop* indicate, students themselves will likely have strong ideas about when Spanish should be used in class. As they discuss the issue, larger questions of language and identity are likely to come up. These are the very concerns that are woven throughout *Sabemos y Podemos*.

A Flexible Curriculum

Latinos include Chicanos in the Southwest who have been in U.S. since before the border moved; recent Central American immigrants to Seattle; teenagers who've grown up in Hartford, Connecticut; South Americans from diverse economic backgrounds, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and more. The reasons they or their families left their homes are as varied as the places from which they came, ranging from unemployment, to war and political repression, to lack of opportunities to pursue their life's goals. A specific group of people in a specific place will have both shared (and conflicting) interests and desires. With this in mind, *Sabemos y Podemos* is designed to be a guide, not a package to be used from beginning to end. The activities and discussion ideas in *Sabemos y Podemos* are opportunities to help students engage with the themes raised, identify their own questions about these issues, consider their own responses, and create plans of action. It's not assumed that teachers will use the curriculum in its entirety, but rather

that they will instead choose the ideas that are most relevant to their own community. Participatory, inquiry-based learning is a cyclical process, not a linear one. Enter into the process at whatever point makes sense for you and your students, and jump around to wherever your discussions lead you.

Assessment and Reflecting on the Lessons

A participatory approach to learning requires a participatory approach to assessment. A bibliography of assessment publications is listed under the Resources section at the end of this book. But there are things you can start doing in your classroom right now to help students reflect on their own progress. After each lesson, allow time for participants to pause and name the ways they have just used language and literacy skills. That way, they are more likely to hold onto new skills learned and apply them on their own.

In wrapping up a lesson, you'll also want to give students a chance to more deeply consider new information and ideas. You will notice that few of the lessons have these final kinds of activities spelled out. That's because what you do to wrap up a lesson will depend on what occurred in your particular class as you implemented it. The following are questions you can choose from, to use at the end of each lesson. Each allows you and your students to linger a bit over the issues raised:

- What did you find most persuasive or convincing today?
- Which of your beliefs were strengthened, changed, or broadened as a result of what we did today?
- Does what you heard today coincide with what you thought before, or have you changed your ideas?
- What surprised you?
- Has a new idea led you to a new question? Has a new question led you to a new idea?
- What were the major themes that emerged in class today?
- "What happened today?" (This simple question gives both the teacher and students various perspectives on what occurred as a result of your day's work together.)

You can also create a space for students to voice other ideas that are swirling in their heads, by asking, "What is there that seems important that we still need to talk about?" If you are able to, fill them in on how upcoming classes will address their concerns. If you need time to think about it, let them know you'll begin the next class by laying out some possible plans.

Victories

Each section of this curriculum ends with descriptions of real-life victories won by parents, working people, and community members across the country. Use them to inspire you and your students to believe change is possible.

Facilitating Rich Discussions

When teachers ask students for their ideas, an initial response is frequently a variation of "I don't know—you decide, you're the teacher." Many times the "I don't know" is really, "I don't have anything to say that I think you want to hear." Prove that you want to hear students' ideas and questions, and that you don't think you already have answers to the questions asked. Demonstrate that there's a community of people in the room who also want to hear, and can help explore, these ideas. The following are some strategies that help to facilitate this. While several might seem obvious, it's sometimes easy to forget to use them!

Strategies

- Encourage students to ask you and each other for clarification when they need it. (Of course, modeling this will help.) Asking for clarification is an important way to really tune into what others are saying. It also encourages the speaker to closely examine his or her own ideas.
- All teachers have moments when they think discussions are going off-track. Ask yourself, "Is my perception of 'the track' shared by my students? Is what I perceive as off the subject in fact relate in a way I didn't immediately see?"
- If you find you typically talk after each person speaks, remind yourself to allow students to engage with each other. If this doesn't happen spontaneously, help turn the class into a group in which its members relate to one other, not just to you, by re!ating what one speaker says to what another has said. When appropriate, take questions addressed to you and return them to the group.
- Encourage the group to stay with the thread of a discussion by checking to see if anyone wants to address an issue just raised, before moving on to someone whose comments might change the subject. Try something like, "Does anyone want to add to what Emanuela just said? Anyone agree? Disagree?"
- Silences can be the hardest thing for a teacher to live with. Our inclination is to want to fill them up. Yet, if we can hold out, the seemingly empty spaces almost always become more productive than awkward, and allow students to think. They let students know that we're serious about wanting to know what they think. This can produce important contributions. To ease some of the anxiety that silence can create (both for us and for our students), you might want to say, "Take some time to think," and allow the silence to continue.
- Related to the suggestion above, don't be too quick to cut off a brainstorming session. Even if it seems to be winding down, be sure to allow a little extra time for additional ideas to come out. A fast pace is not always what's needed.

- If a student speaks in generalities, ask if s/he can speak from experience, as a way to get them to be specific. To bring out the beliefs that underlie an opinion, ask the speaker for the reasons behind them.

- Sometimes when a discussion becomes particularly heated and confusing at the same time, an effective strategy is to ask everyone to stop and just write whatever is on their minds at that very instant. Not only does it help refocus the discussion, but some of the most reflective writing can flourish at these moments.

- If discussion suddenly stops after you ask a question, try asking something like, "Maybe my question doesn't get at your real concerns. What do you think we should really be talking about here?" or "What seems to be the central issue right now?"

- Be aware of the ways in which race, gender, language skills, economic status and other factors will affect power dynamics in the classroom—such as who has access to the group process, and who takes the floor. If someone dominates the conversation, try interrupting with, "Thank you. We'll try to come back to what you're saying. But let's stop here and see what other people are thinking." Another effective strategy is to simply shift your position in the room. As you move to another corner, participants' gaze will move with you, taking in other people in the room. Encourage new participants by moving toward them as they begin to speak.

- If a misconception is put out—a stereotype, for example—ask, "Has anyone heard of information that contradicts this?" If not, stop and ask how the group or specific individuals might check into whether or not the statement or assumption made is true. (While we all make on-our-feet decisions about what to interrupt and what to let pass during a discussion, letting certain things stand can be dangerous.)

- Many of the activities in this curriculum facilitate dialogue among students. Other times, they are asked to write down their ideas before a discussion in order to gather their thoughts before sharing them. These can be effective strategies for bringing more voices into the conversation.

- Asking something as simple as, "Say more about that," or "What *are* your questions?" helps expand discussions, in contrast to "Are there any questions?" A comment such as, "I'd like to invite someone who hasn't spoken yet to join the discussion" also encourages more students to participate in a conversation that examines the topic from more angles.

- Before ending the discussion, provide one more opportunity for input by asking, "Who has some last comments or thoughts?"

Notes on the Uses of Writing*

If your students have not done a lot of writing so far, *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action* is a good place to begin. Some of the questions teachers raise—such as "How do we help people become less afraid to write?" or "How do we motivate them?"—become moot once people are *engaged*, using writing to root out answers to questions they have identified, in an investigation they have structured, believing there are people who will collaborate with them in the study, and listen while they think out loud.

Inside this pencil
crouch words that have never been written
never been spoken
never been thought . . .

– W.S. Merwin

In *Sabemos y Podemos*, the emphasis is on using writing to explore one's ideas, rather than to document them. Before asking students to write, talk with them about writing—how ideas don't just move from mind to page, but from mind to page and back. New ideas are perceived as they are written, a new thought comes more clearly into view, familiar ones take unexpected turns, connections develop between experiences or notions we never connected before. Explain how we sometimes start out writing one thing and something entirely different ends up on the page. This notion, which may seem crazy to students in the beginning, has ended up being the most freeing for those who believed "good writing" comes out fully formed when a writer sits down.

I remember one student who began with a memory of her mother shooing her inside the house when the Klu Klux Klan had their regular marches down the middle of the town's main street. She found herself writing that she never before saw her mother seem afraid, and as she wrote, she wondered for the first time what her mother was really feeling at the time of the incident. When we write about a past experience, we don't simply document it; we live the experience differently. Narratives become more than "memory" pieces. They become opportunities to try unfamiliar territory, to re-see memories—and often to put them in a social context, placed side by side with the narratives of others.

The key here is to encourage students to produce words without judging them at the same time. It is in large part the constant self-evaluation of what we're saying, as we're saying it, which keeps students, and sometimes teachers, from getting past the first few sentences, if we ever start! One of the ways that the lessons in *Sabemos y Podemos* are useful is that they are based on content that's *compelling* to people, letting them suspend judgment and write.

Let students know that stopping to look up a word in the dictionary, or even asking someone else how to spell it, can sometimes stop them in their tracks. Suggest they instead quickly guess at a spelling, or draw a line in place of the word, knowing that later they can look it up. (Before they begin, students often protest they'll forget the words they wanted by the time they're done with the draft. Yet experience shows that even those with words missing in every sentence can later remember the words.) If students are writing in English and get stuck, they can also use Spanish words to facilitate the writing.

Some of the exercises in *Sabemos y Podemos* suggest that students take their initial writings and move them through drafts. Many students will be used to thinking of a second draft as simply an edit for spelling and mechanics. Few will have been asked to do real revisions before, going through *several* drafts before a piece is considered "done." Try writing "revision" on the board and asking students to identify the root word, and then the entire meaning using the prefix. Doing this, "re-vision" can be defined as the point at which the writer steps back and re-sees his or her own ideas. Maybe s/he realizes that what s/he really wanted to say only came out in the very last sentence of the first draft. Maybe the idea isn't on the page at all but pops into mind when the writer reads what *is* there. Adding, crossing out, rearranging, and even starting over—all become possibilities for a next move.

Many teachers prefer to ask students to write right away, instead of beginning by talking about writing. But knowing ahead of time that what's written isn't frozen on the page has helped students pick up the pen the first day and let it move.

*Adapted from *Other colors: Stories of women immigrants teaching for* by R. Martin and T. Schrieber. See "References" at the end of this section.

17

Vocabulary and Class Readings in *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action*

I used to prepare pre-reading vocabulary lists for my students, but found I very often predicted wrongly the words they would find difficult. Then I tried some new approaches that made me abandon lists forever, replacing them with vocabulary strategies determined by the reader as s/he reads. Christine Nuttal (1982) writes, "Most words are not learned by being taught but by meeting them in context and assimilating their meaning." She points out the use of "probabilities" instead of certainties. "The more we read, the more probabilities turn into certainties without our being aware of it. Making use of context gives a rough definition of a word; each subsequent occurrence makes it more precise."

Ideas such as Nuttal's gave me the confidence to show students that it is possible to understand new words without being told what they mean. Now I ask them what happens when they interrupt their reading to look up a word in the dictionary. This elicits the inevitable response that they lose their train of thought. *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action* uses vocabulary-enhancing strategies that allow students to learn about words through the context in which they appear (See Lesson Six of "Advocating for School Success" in ***Educating Our Children***). After using those strategies, ask students to raise any remaining questions they have about a word. Then, ask everyone to guess at what the word means. By asking students to reach beyond what they think they know, they very often come up with a definition that makes sense. When they do, that experience of success gives them encouragement to trust their instincts the next time around, instincts based on knowledge we don't always realize we have.

Recently, I've come across another strategy that fits with this approach, and has further helped my students tackle what might otherwise appear to be difficult readings. Martha Ruddell (1997) calls it the "Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS)." After reading and discussion, everyone (including the teacher) nominates one word or term they would like to learn more about. This works best in nominating teams of two to five people. Each team tells where they found the word, what they think the word means, and why they think the class should learn it. The teacher writes the words on the board and facilitates a group definition of each, using the context and students' own prior knowledge and experiences. In *Sabemos y Podemos*, students further internalize such words or phrases as "standardized tests" or "tracking" by using them later in the same lesson or subsequent ones.

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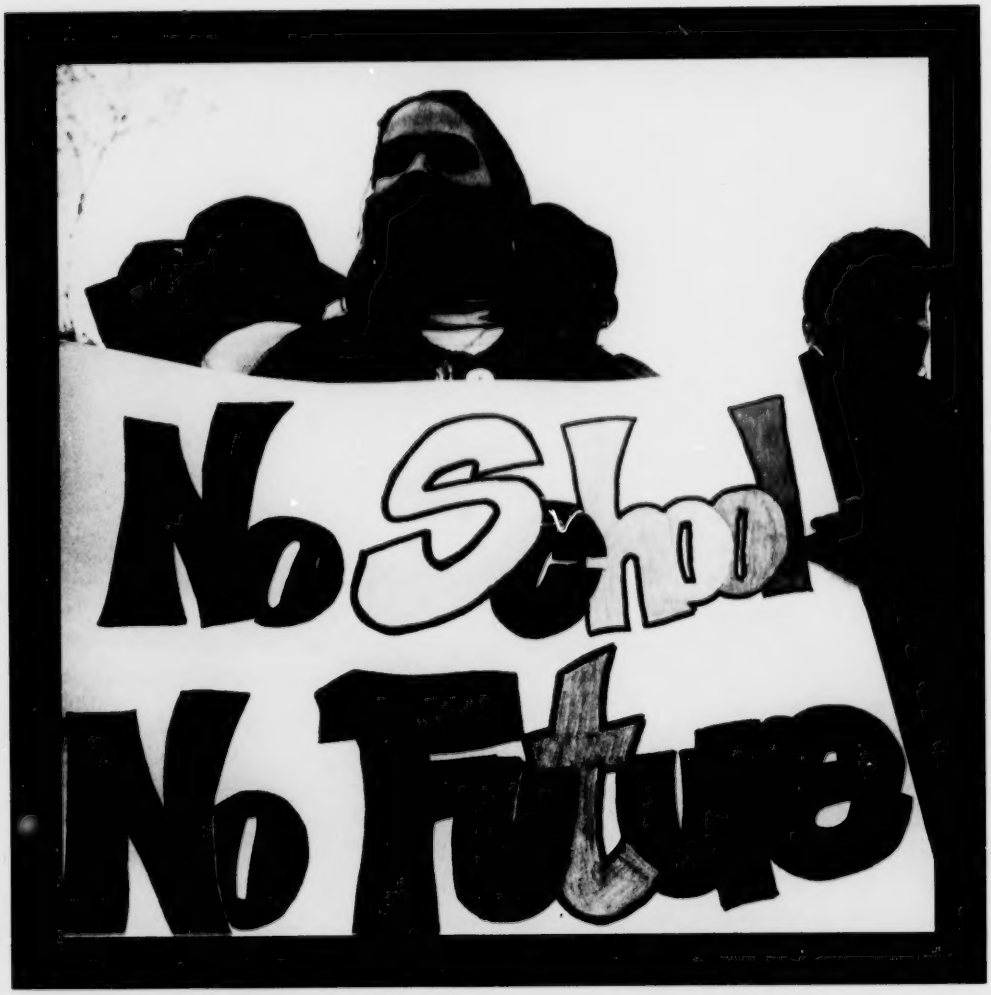
Educating Our Children



H.L. Delgado/Impact Visuals

Demonstrator, outside City Hall, calls for an end to proposed additional $190 million mid-year cuts to city's school budget at a "Marathon Speak-out Against Education Budget Cuts" sponsored by United Parents Association and others at City Hall Park.

Introduction to Educating Our Children

It's no surprise that many Latino immigrants find it difficult to be involved in their children's schools. Some of the barriers to parent involvement are the same as those that inhibit involvement in other kinds of commitment outside of home and work: not feeling comfortable speaking English, a difficult work schedule, or not having childcare. With specific regard to education, some parents* are uncertain about their right to be involved in decision-making about their children's schooling. Even if they believe they have a right to be actively involved, many parents may not know what questions to ask in order to get the answers they need. If they have formulated the questions, how do they figure out whom to go to for a response? Fathers may be even more reluctant than mothers to talk with their children's teachers, even more fearful of being put in a situation where they do not feel respected.

There are just as many, if not more, barriers to parental involvement to be found within school practices themselves. Sometimes what creates the biggest obstacle to parental involvement is simply a lack of bilingual staff. Even well-intentioned school staff don't always know how to involve parents beyond bake sales and parent-teacher conferences. Beyond that, there are often policies that work to discourage involvement, and staff who are less than welcoming, or even hostile toward parents who are seen as "interfering" in school practices. Many parents fear such hostility will be taken out on their children if they themselves "cause trouble" by trying to "interfere."

While these hurdles stand in the way for many poor and immigrant parents, parents nevertheless successfully cross them everyday to become advocates for their children. In part, their courage comes from something all parents share—high aspirations for their children. It also comes from the confidence that they *know* their children. Often, parents also know how their children learn best. And many have worked for change before—in their family and in their community—and are able to apply those skills to their role as educational advocates.

While many of the lessons in this section are aimed towards parents with school-aged children, many will be useful for people interested in exploring their own attitudes and experiences with education, and learning more about educational advocacy. Part 1 of this section, "Maintaining Family History and Culture" is based on the premise that immigrant students' academic success depends on a connection to their home culture. Many Latino-focused or Spanish language curricula and handbooks exist, which focus on reading to children at home, using the public library, and monitoring homework. An extensive bibliography of such resources can be found at the end of *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action*. Unfortunately, few curricula focus on strengthening children's connection to their parents' traditions, thereby reviving the respect

children sometimes lose for their parents when they come to the U.S. This section emphasizes ways to enhance the connection with the home culture, and the vital role culture plays in immigrant children's success in school. It also includes examples of projects that have brought parent knowledge and culture into the classroom itself, beginning to shift the power balance between parents and teachers.

The lessons in ***Part 2: Advocating for School Success***, are intended to offer parents a chance to share their concerns about their children's education, and their hopes for their children's future. They address some of the barriers listed above, and provide beginning strategies and skills for overcoming them.

The final lesson is geared to helping participants develop plans of action. But some participants may begin using what they learn before you get there! So give them a chance to share their stories throughout the program. You may also want to bump this lesson up and implement it earlier if the time seems right.

Part 3: Changing Schools, focuses on how schools must change, and parents' role in leading the effort. The lessons in Part 3 address two key issues for Latino students: bilingual education and tracking. Also included are resources and curricular ideas for equally important issues that disproportionately affect Latinos: grade retention, anti-bias training for teachers, discipline procedures and due process, curriculum and instruction, college preparation, hiring of Latino staff, school budgets and issues specific to Latinas.

Many of the stories of community victories in ***Educating Our Children***— from challenging disciplinary procedures in Philadelphia, to creating innovative reading programs in Washington, DC—highlight the need to address the underlying institutional racism that creates programs and policies that fail immigrant children. Issues of gender equity are also raised in Part 3, which highlights the voices of parents and youth themselves.

Put simply, what parents need is a place where they can talk with each other. In ESL educator's Gail Weinstein-Shr's words, parents need opportunities to "gather information about their new environment and evaluate for themselves both traditional and new strategies for dealing with discipline, with school, or with other complex issues involved in raising children in a complicated world." (Weinstein-Shr and Quintero, 1995) Creating that space is one of the primary goals of this curriculum. It offers new information, and provides an atmosphere in which parents can consider it, formulate questions, and act, in order to improve the chances for school success for their children, and for all children.

* Please note that "parents" are defined here as biological parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings, foster parents, or any adult with significant responsibility for caring for children.

References

Weinstein-Shr, G. and E. Quintero. 1995. *Immigrant learners and their families: Literacy to connect the generations*. McHenry, IL: Delta Systems.

Educating Our Children

Part 1: Maintaining Family History and Culture

A Note About Part I

Before the disruptions of displacement, many immigrant families had more experience than most Americans with maintaining strong extended families, raising secure children, and creating family support networks that nurture children and elders alike.

Gail Weinstein-Shr
(Weinstein-Shr and Quintero, 1995)

When families move to a new country, family roles change. It becomes harder for parents to maintain positive relationships with their teenagers, understand their children's behavior in the new culture, and support their struggles to be bicultural.

Though many people don't realize it, having a strong ethnic identity can have a significant impact on immigrant children's achievement in school. By maintaining a bond to their home culture and language, children and youth hold on to the family ties that support academic success. This section offers four lessons for retaining or rebuilding those bonds.

A Note on Reading to Children

It's important here to note a common misconception: that reading to children is the most important factor in their success in school, suggesting that parents who struggle to read themselves are failing their children in vital ways. The truth is, children who read aloud *to their parents* have been shown to benefit as much as, or more than, those who are tutored by a reading specialist. And if parents do read to their children, it needn't be in English in order for children to begin to learn the reading process, as well as the joy reading can bring. Be sure to share this information with the students in your class before you begin these lessons. Encourage them to take pleasure in *whatever* literacy activities they engage in as a family.

Lesson One

Mural Making

EFF Generative Skills
Guide others
Reflect and evaluate

Objective
To recall and document the cultural traditions and events of which we are proud.

Materials
For each participant: scissors and a large piece of newsprint paper
To share: magazines, pens, and paper of assorted colors

Suggested Process
Ask each student to make a mural for their children. They might include *dichos* they want their children to remember, things they are proud of in their traditions, historic events, and the like. They can write the words, draw illustrations, or cut out words or images from the magazines. Encourage them to consider the shapes and colors that match each word.

Extension
You may want to encourage parents to ask their children what they would like to contribute to the mural.

The Writing Process

Begin by asking students, "What comes into your head when I ask you, 'What is writing?'" Allow time for a number of responses to emerge. They may vary from "communication," to "love letters" to "putting your thoughts on paper." Very rarely do students express the idea that writing is more than taking the ideas in one's head and putting them on paper. Let them know writing is also *discovering* what one has to say; it is ***finding out*** what is in one's head.

Tell students the first step will be to write a "**draft**," where the key is to produce words without judging them at the same time! You may want to try applying these three rules: (1) write fast; (2) change nothing; and (3) keep the pen moving. This kind of writing is sometimes called "freewriting."

Share with students that the next step will be "**revision**." With "vision" as the root word, revision is defined here as the chance to re-see your own ideas. During revision, writers may cross out, add, or start over, all the while getting closer and closer to what they want to say. Their writing may go through one revision or six before they feel their story is done.

Finally, students will be ready to "**edit**" their work. Making changes in grammar, spelling and punctuation will help give further shape to what they want to say, but only after they've had a chance to find out what that is through the process above.

Using the "Key Phrases" Technique

"Key Phrases" is a useful tool to get students to begin writing. Simply ask people to take a moment to think about a specific topic such as "my favorite food." Go around the room asking each student to share a brief story about the topic.

In encouraging people to share their stories, you might try a prompt such as "Does anyone remember the first meal you cooked?" "Does anyone work in a restaurant?" But you also may not need these at all.

As each person begins to tell his or her story, jot down on the blackboard a key word or phrase which you think has something more behind it. Some examples could include: "mother always made tortillas by hand," "25 cents a bucket," or "I like my beans separate from my rice."

It's important to just get a bit of each story, not too much. Make sure to hear from everyone. If possible, jot down two or three words or phrases from each person, so that they have several choices when they begin to write.

Now, ask everyone to take one thing from the board that is theirs, and write the story behind it. (You can also let them know that if something else comes to mind about the topic, but it's not on the board, they can choose to write about that instead.) Remind them to write without editing and to keep the pen moving.

Lesson Two

Who We Are

EFF Generative Skills
Convey ideas in writing
Guide others
Reflect and evaluate

Objectives
To begin exploring issues of identity.

To share the multiple sides of who we are with our children.

Notes on this lesson
Often, youth have a one-dimensional view of their parents. In one example, organizers of the bilingual/bicultural Central Manchester Caribbean English Project in England found that many of the young participants expressed the idea that their parents had "taken a lot of racist treatment and done nothing to defend themselves." Begun as a project by Caribbean youth to learn about the African heritage they were never taught in school, the participants went on to interview their parents and grandparents. The result was a Patois/English book which contradicts the young people's previous view of their elders as a "docile, accepting people." (1986) The stories portray parents' and grandparents' daily acts of defiance and solidarity in their jobs in Manchester's dye and canning factories. This lesson is presented in the same spirit, knowing that there are multiple sides to parents, but too often their children don't get a chance to see them.

Suggested Process
Before beginning this writing activity, review "Notes on the Uses of Writing" in the Introduction of *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action.*

The following is a suggested process for this and other writing exercises:

When you notice that about half the people in the room have stopped writing, ask the others to take just a minute to finish the thought they are on.

Let everyone know you are not concerned with how much anyone has written; one person may have a line or two, another a page. It absolutely doesn't matter. Now ask for volunteers who would like to read what they wrote. Let the group know that as tempting as it might be to respond after someone has read, you want to give the writer the chance to think first about where his or her writing is going, and you will be asking questions to help him or her get there.

After an individual has read, try asking any one of the questions below. Trust yourself, using the question that seems right at the moment:

- "What's the most important thing you're saying?"
- "Circle three things that stand out for you." After s/he's done so, suggest s/he choose one to write more about.
- "If you were going to keep writing this piece, where would you go next?" If s/he begins to explain, suggest he or she stop and begin writing.
- "Try placing a check wherever you have more to tell. Try for three checks. Then go ahead and tell more."
- "Do you hear any voice in there?" If the response is yes, ask, "Who?" Then suggest s/he put that person into his or her writing.
- "Is there anything you wrote that surprised you?"

If the writer seems to have a hard time answering a question such as, "What's the most important thing you're saying," ask him or her to take a few moments to think about it. This takes some pressure off, but also lets the student know the decision is his or hers to make. Don't be afraid to allow silence, and let the writer thinks about his or her writing.

You will notice nowhere here is there a suggestion that you tell the writer his or her writing is good. First drafts are often not yet "good." Often, a compelling story isn't there yet. And even when it is, it may be just the beginning. Remember, the first draft is the writer's chance to start thinking. And as far as validation of the writing, the writer gets that by having an attentive listener who wants to know more.

Not everyone will choose to read what they wrote out loud. Many students who don't share their writing with the class will find themselves applying the questions they hear you ask to their own writings. When everyone who wants to read has had a chance, check in to see if everyone else is able to use one of your questions to go on to a second draft. If there's someone who isn't sure, meet with him/her individually. Ask if it's OK if you read what s/he wrote and then offer one of the questions above.

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After doing a revision based on the answers to these questions, the writing is not yet done! Sometimes another of the questions above will move the writing further, or the writer may be ready for one of the following:

- "Where does this piece really begin?"
- "Is there more than one story here?"
- "What do you want the reader to know or feel at the end of your piece?"

For this lesson, you can choose among four writing exercises, each one to be used with the class as a whole. You may also choose to do all four.

Writing Exercise Number One: Your First Job

This activity uses the key phrases technique. Ask people to take a moment to think about the first job they ever had. Suggest that everyone has worked, even if they never had a paying job. You might use two examples that came up in one class: a man whose first job was swatting flies on his neighbor's stoop for a penny each, and a woman who helped her mother fold the ironing she took in.

In encouraging people to share their stories, you might try a prompt such as "Does anyone remember their boss?" "Does anyone work for a family member?" "Who remembers what they did with their first check?" Jot down on the blackboard the key words or phrases. Some examples can include: "I always take a cab when I'm quitting," "I bought all my own clothes," and "We couldn't go to school."

Now, ask everyone to take one thing from the board that is theirs, and write the story behind it.

Extensions

As a follow-up to the writing exercise "Your First Job," you can have students write about their parents' jobs, or what they know about their grandparents' work.

To move the writing beyond personal narrative and into collective reflection, facilitate further discussion and writing about the similarities and differences in work among the generations, or in various countries. Something that can be very effective is to ask small groups of students who perceive a connection among their writings to treat them as a whole, and collaboratively write an introduction.

In fact, with each of the writings above, encourage students to put their personal narratives into a broader context. One person's story of sexual harassment on the job, or unequal pay, turns into a more powerful catalyst for change when it becomes a common issue for many members of a group. Gender roles, environmental issues, child-rearing practices, health care, housing . . . these are just some of the themes that may emerge as people discover, hone, and share their stories.

Writing Exercise Number Two: The Story of Your Name

This activity works well without the use of key phrases. After talking with the group about the approach to writing described above, ask each student to write the story of his or her name. That's usually all you need to say. You will find that the stories that get told may range from homebirth experiences, to the stories of fathers who had already left for the U.S. at the time of the writer's birth, to the tales of the heroic family member after whom someone was named.

Extension

As a second part to this activity, you can ask students to write the stories of the names they gave their children.

Writing Exercise Number Three: What Do You Want Your Children to Know About You?

Begin this activity by quoting the story of the Manchester youth, found under "Notes on this lesson." Then ask, "What do you want your children to know about you?" and use the "key phrases" activity to generate writing.

Writing Exercise Number Four: Wise People in Your Family and Community

Again, jotting down on the blackboard the key words or phrases you hear, ask students to think about the wise people in their family or community. If some find this a hard question to answer, ask them to think of people in their family or community whom they hope their children might grow up to be like.

Reflection

Ask students to reflect on the writing process they used in the activities above. You might use questions such as the following: "Was it helpful to write a first draft without making any changes?" "What happened during the revision process?" "What made these writing activities different from the writing you've done in the past?"

Lesson Three

Book-Making

EFF Generative Skills
Convey ideas in writing
Guide others

Objective
To create books which celebrate family history and culture.

Materials
For each participant: eight copies of the attached "Blackline Master" handouts, and a pair of scissors
To share: glue sticks and rolls of scotch tape

Optional: An assortment of glitter, cotton balls, ribbons, yarn, and other craft materials some of the your students may have at home and be willing to bring in to share.

Suggested Process
Below are directions for making a circular book called a Folded Spiral™. Instead of turning the pages, the reader unfolds them clockwise.

A Folded Spiral™ is opened by turning each quarter-page clockwise. It closes by turning each quarter-page counter-clockwise. The story unfolds as the pages do. Students may take one of the writings in Lesson Two to be adapted for the Folded Spiral™, or the process of making the book itself may inspire a new writing. For example, beautiful books have been created to illustrate the process of Navajo basket weaving, or the steps involved in preparing for a *Quinceañera* party. A story told chronologically, such as one a parent might write to his child about the day on which s/he was born might describe something on one page that hints at what will be found on the next page.

You will definitely want to make one or two Folded Spiral™ books yourself before making one with your class, both to familiarize yourself with the process, and to have some examples to show.

Once you've followed the directions and have a basic Folded Spiral™ design, the options for creativity are limitless:

- The outer edges of the book can be designed to match the writing. In a story about arriving to the United States by boat, for example, the edges of each page might be cut to look like the waves of the ocean.

- Pop-ups can be added to individual pages, or placed in the center of the spiral, only to be revealed once the book is fully opened.

- An element of continuity can tie each page to the next. The Rio Grande River might flow throughout a book about the sudden changes brought to a Mexican family through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. A road with border patrol checkpoints could take the reader through each page of a story about crossing the Mexican border to find work in San Diego.

- As the pages of the Folded Spiral™ are turned, the backsides become visible. These can also be used for text or illustrations. One idea is to pose a question on the backside of a page. The reader then turns to the next to reveal the answer.

Note that some students will catch on before you've even finished giving directions for the book-making, and they will be able to help others.

Extension

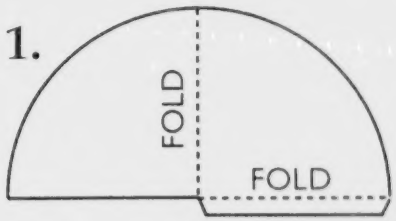
Parents can make Folded Spiral™ books with their children. With help, even those as young as four or five can make one.

*Note. For more information on the Folded Spiral™, see "References" at the end of **Part I: Maintaining Family History and Culture***

Blackline Master Assembly Using Glue

1.

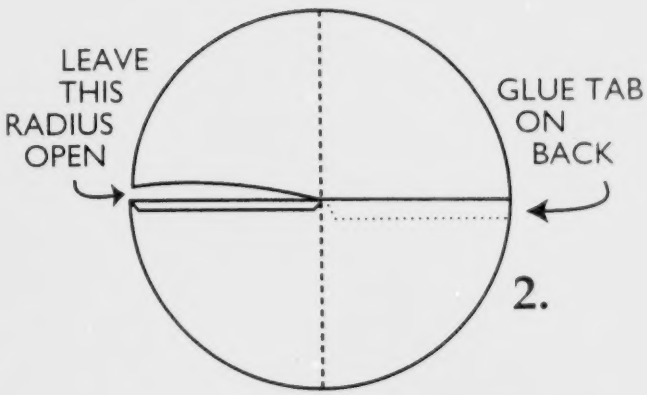
Cut out half-circles, leaving tabs on, and fold in half. Fold tabs in to create a crisp crease on tab line.



2.

Line up the centers of two half circles. Glue the tab of one of them to the underside of the other, leaving an open radius at the 9:00 position.

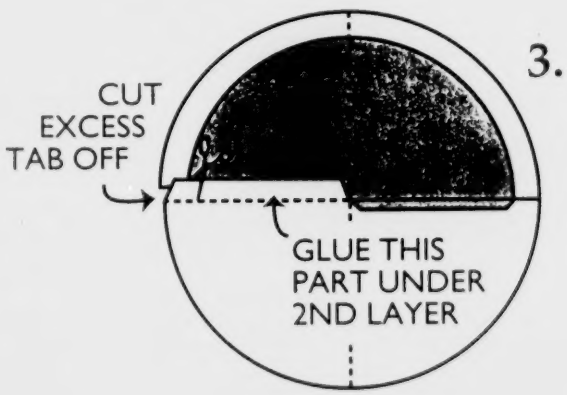
You now have the bottom layer of your Folded Spiral.



3.

Set the next half circle on top of the bottom layer, lining up the centers so that the remaining tab from the bottom layer is matched with the un-tabbed radius of your new piece. Glue that tab to the underside of your new top layer. (On Decreasing Diameter books, you will have to cut off the excess part of the tab as shown.)

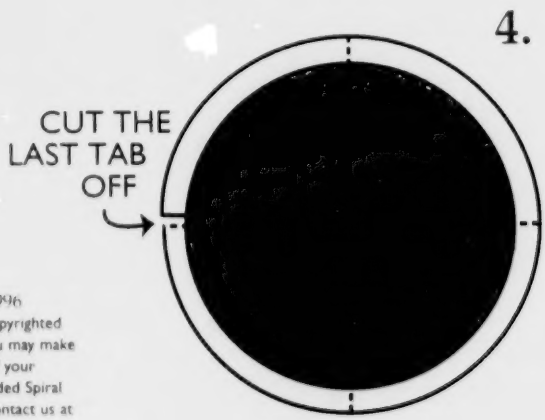
Your bottom layer should now be joined to the first half of your second layer.



4.

Alternate gluing the right hand tab and the left hand tab until all half circles are glued.

Cut off the tab on the last half circle.



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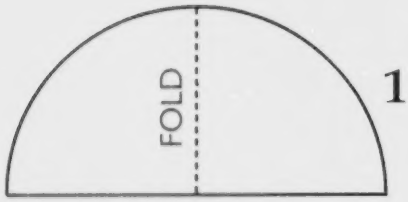
Blackline Master Assembly Using Tape

1.

Cut out half circles (cut off tabs) and fold in half.



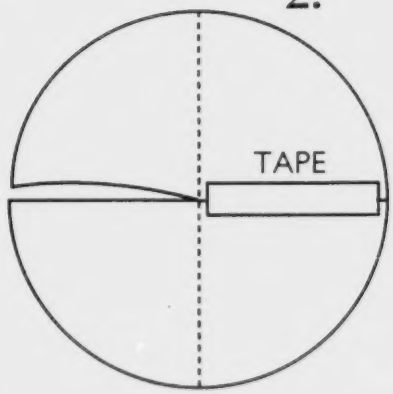
1.

2.

Line up the centers of two half circles. Connect the half circles together by taping along the radius from the center to 3:00. Leave the radius from the center to 9:00 open. Repeat until all half circles have been taped into separate whole circles.

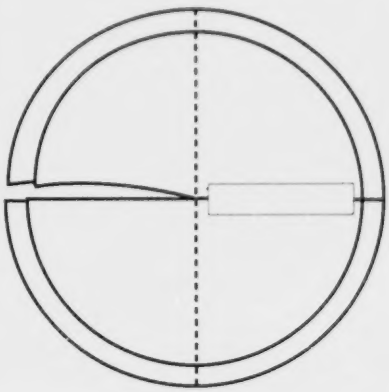
2.

THIS IS THE
9:00 →
POSITION



3.

Set two circles on top of one another, lining up the centers and keeping the open radii at the 9:00 position.

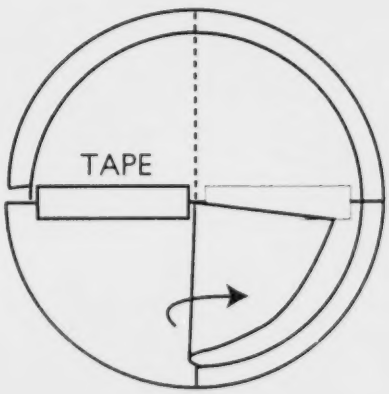


3.

4.

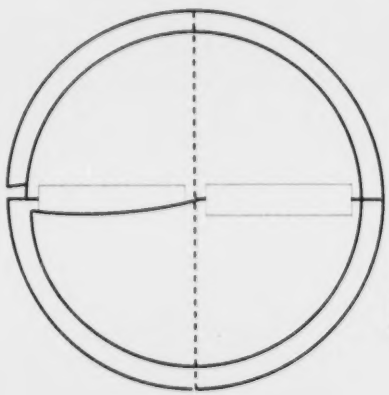
Fold the lower left hand quarter of the top circle to the right. Connect the bottom circle to the top circle by taping along the open radii at the 9:00 position. The edges that are taped together should be flush.

4.



5.

Fold the lower quarter of the top circle back to the left so that the top circle is now a whole circle.



5.

6.

Repear steps 4 and 5 with remaining circles.

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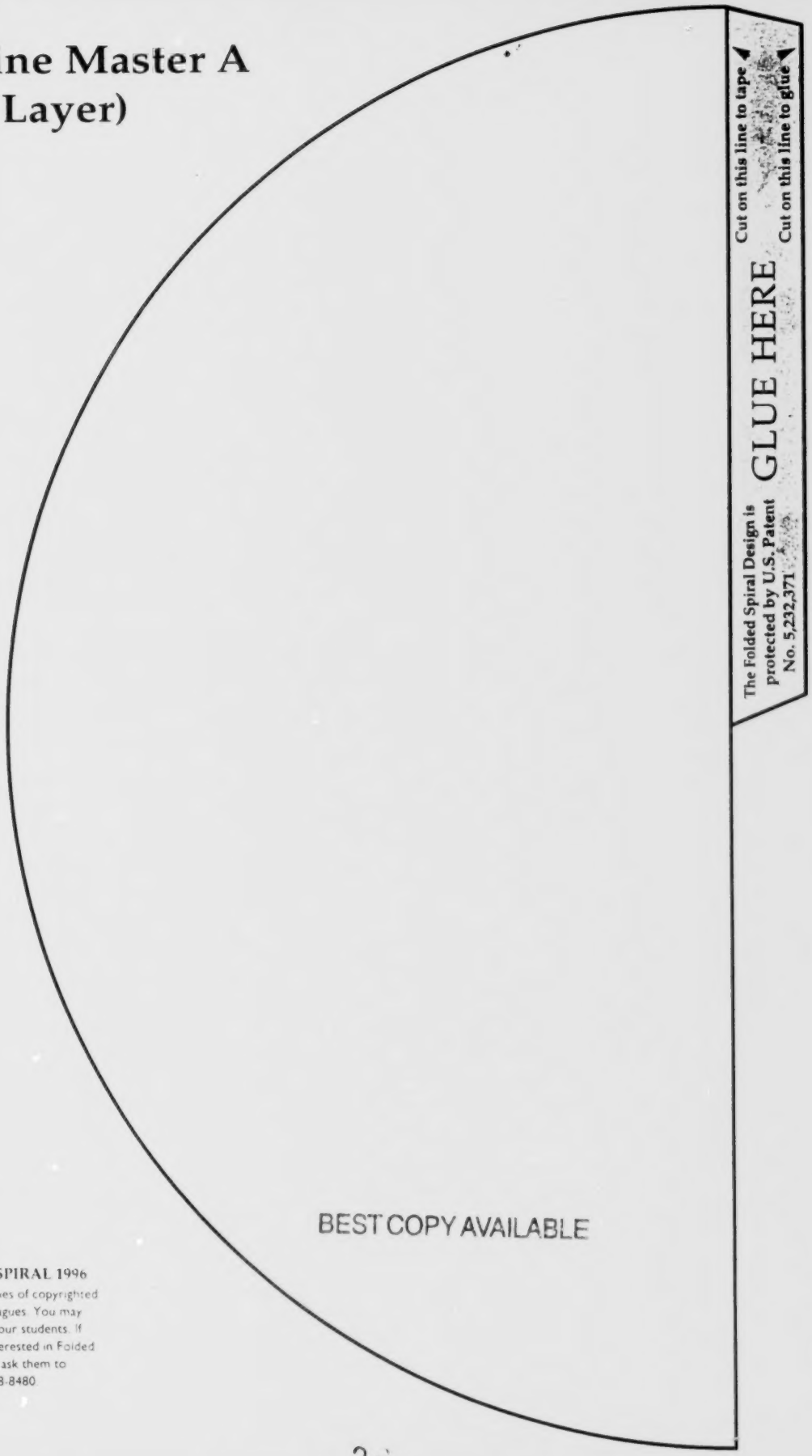
Blackline Master A
(Large Layer)



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Lesson Four

A Century for a Country and a Family

EFF Generative Skills
Convey ideas in writing
Guide others
Reflect and evaluate

Objective
To recall and name the public and private events, accomplishments, and celebrations that parents want their children to know about.

Materials
For each student: three to four sheets of large newsprint paper, taped together to form one long horizontal sheet, and one magic marker

Suggested Process
Have each person write 1900 on the left-hand bottom corner of his or her timeline, and 2000 on the right-hand bottom corner, with a horizontal line connecting the two dates.

Ask students to begin to fill in whatever seems like important events, accomplishments, and celebrations, both for their country and their extended family between 1900 and now. Let them know that instead of their home country, they could use their state, province, city, village, or town, if that makes more sense. Have them jot down approximate years, or even decades, if they're not certain about the exact dates of the things they want to include.

Save time in class to tape these to the wall and allow students to walk around and to view each other's timelines.

Ask everyone to take his or her timeline home to share with children and other family members.

Extension

Ask students to see if other family members might want to add dates and events. Ask them to take note of the kinds of things that are important to their children, or to their own parents. During the next class, provide time for people to talk about these.

Victory Stories

Parents Find a Voice in the School Curriculum

In the Mount Pleasant neighborhood of Washington, DC, African-American and Latino parents spent their Saturdays writing about their lives. As part of the Tellin' Stories Project, they shared their writings—about their jobs, childhood, and immigration stories—in their children's classrooms. Not only did the children gain new respect for their parents, but as John Rankin writes in *Rethinking Schools*, "Teachers learned that some immigrants had to leave children in their home country, while others are working two or three jobs for less than minimum wage. Teachers generally were aware of this, but this was the first time they had 'heard' the personal stories which gave life to these experiences." The project's goals were to encourage parents to become advocates in the schools, to build bridges between school personnel, low-income parents, and parents of color, so that both could work together in efforts for school change. The first step was for the parents to establish themselves as people with knowledge and expertise to be shared, through writing.

Information from "Building bridges with books" by J Rankin in the Spring 1993 edition of *Rethinking Schools*. See "References" at the end of ***Part 1: Maintaining Family History and Culture***.

Becoming a Learning Community

Southeast Asian and Latino parents studying English in Arlington, Virginia, along with their elementary school-age children, wrote and illustrated *We Like Our Community: Columbia Heights West Activity and Coloring Book*. After exchanging ideas in class about the needs of the neighborhood, advanced students and older children researched community resources and then wrote the text. *We Like Our Community* offers information on community agencies, local shops, crime-prevention tips, and telephone numbers for the local schools. Beginning ESL students and younger children provided the illustrations. The book has been distributed to bilingual community centers to inform those new to the neighborhood, and as a coloring book for their children.

Information from "Family literacy: Creating a learning community" by C. Grenuk in the February 1998 edition of *Change Agent*. See "References" at the end of ***Part 1: Maintaining Family History and Culture***.

Handout 41

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Educating Our Children

Part 2: Advocating for School Success

I Agree! I Disagree! I'm Not Sure!

EFF Generative Skills
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Solve problems and make decisions
Reflect and evaluate

Objective
To generate discussion about parents' role in advocating for their children in school, and some of the obstacles they may face.

Materials
Three signs: "Agree," "Disagree," and "Not Sure"

Suggested Process
Post each sign in a different area of the room.

Let the students know you will be reading a number of statements. In response to each one, you would like them to choose a sign to stand under. Once everyone has moved, you will be asking for one or two people under each sign to articulate the reason for his or her position. Emphasize that if anyone is persuaded by what they hear, they can change their position. (Of course, you may want to add your own statements to those below.)

Statements

- My children can advance in school even before they learn English.
- It is the parents' responsibility to teach their children respect and the right way to behave.
- It is the school's job to teach knowledge. Teaching is not the parents' business.
- If the teacher says my child has a learning disability, it must be true.
- If my child is not doing well in school, he or she must be lazy.
- The teacher should contact me when my child does something really well, and also when there is a problem.
- If my child is getting passing grades, and being promoted to the next grade, s/he must be learning what s/he needs to learn.
- I feel welcome at my children's school.
- Even if I wanted to be at the school more, and talk with my children's teachers, I wouldn't know what to ask.
- I'm afraid my son or daughter's teachers would think I was interfering if I went to the school to talk with them more often.
- It is even harder for fathers to be involved in their kids' education.

After the activity, ask each participant to do a three-minute freewrite on whatever is on her mind at this moment about her children's schooling, or her own role in it. Then ask to hear some of these reflections. Be sure to collect these free writings so they may be used again in Lesson Nine.

Lesson Two

Memories of School

EFF Generative Skills
Convey ideas in writing
Reflect and evaluate

Objectives
To identify the ways the U.S. public school system differs from and is similar to that of Latin American countries.

To look at the ways parents' own school experiences might inhibit or motivate their involvement in their children's school.

Notes on this lesson
Be prepared for eloquent, powerful, sometimes painful stories to emerge. Many people will be reliving memories long forgotten, or remembering/creating unexpected stories.

Suggested Process
This activity is called "guided imagery." Begin by asking students to get comfortable in their chairs, and tell them they won't need to write yet. Then ask them to close their eyes, if they feel comfortable doing so. (You can let them know this helps, but it's not necessary.)

Now use the following guidelines, or come up with your own. The most important thing is to speak very slowly and allow plenty of time for imagining.

Guided Imagery

I'd like you to imagine yourself as a child in school. You might be seven years old, or ten, or fourteen . . . It doesn't matter; you choose. But get an image of yourself at a particular age.

Where are you? Are you in a classroom? A courtyard? The girls' locker room? Eating lunch? Locate yourself at some particular spot in school.

Now, what does the rest of the school look like? Is it clean? Messy? Is it new or old? What material is it made of? Get an image of your school.

What about the landscape around your school? What does the landscape look like?

Now return to the image of yourself in a specific place in the school. Imagine who is around you. Are there other students? Who? What do they look like? Do you remember their names? Is there a teacher there? If so, what does he or she look like? Can you remember his or her name?

The people around you, what are they saying? Of course, you won't remember exactly, but what do you imagine they are saying?

What else do you hear at your school? What other sounds are there besides voices?

What do you smell at your school?

Now ask everyone to slowly open their eyes and write down the image they have, using freewriting.

Ask students if they want to read what they wrote. As people share what they came up with, ask them to focus on the ways their own schooling differed from that of their children. You may want to list the similarities and differences in two columns, to help focus attention on them.

Facilitate a discussion on how their own experiences of school affect whether or not they can imagine becoming an advocate for their children's academic success.

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Lesson Three

"It's As If I Were Also a Student in the School!"

EFF Generative Skills
Convey ideas in writing
Reflect and evaluate

Objective
To provide parents with a chance to share and analyze their experiences in their children's schools.

Notes on this lesson
As parent activist Lilly Lopez points out, poor and immigrant parents are often confronted with an attitude of, "Just give us your kids, we'll try to fix the damage you've done so far, and hopefully your kids will be able to graduate from school in spite of your interference." A parent from Peru puts it this way: "In reality, there is no partnership. I follow what the school asks of me, what the school tells me. It's as if I were also a student in the school." (McCaleb, 1994)

Materials
For each student: three 3x5 notecards, writing paper and pen, three sheets of unlined paper
One roll of masking tape

Suggested Process

Make a sign with the words, "All Visitors Must Report to the Principal's Office."

Place the sign on a wall in the front of the classroom and ask each student to jot down on the 3x5 index cards three reactions they would have upon seeing this sign as they enter their child's school.

It's important to ask for three reactions. Often the first one or two come easily. Yet it's the latter ones that are sometimes the most compelling. There is something you can do to both take the pressure off, and *at the same time* encourage more ideas. As students write on the cards, you may want to say something like, "If you've got one or two and you think you're done, take some time to see if something else pops into your head."

Ask that everyone look at their cards, decide which is their strongest reaction, take that one, and use it to begin writing a draft on paper. (For ideas on how to encourage students to write a draft, see ***Part 1: Maintaining Family History and Culture***, Lesson Two.)

Facilitate a discussion of teachers' and administrators' attitudes toward parents. You may want to include questions such as: "How does the school show respect for the way you teach your children at home?"

Lastly, ask everyone to take three sheets of paper and create the signs they would like to see upon entering their children's schools.

Of the signs they created, have each person choose one or two to tape up on the wall. Give everyone a chance to walk around the room, reading the signs. Then take a few moments for comments back in the group.

Be sure to collect one card from each student and to ask students to hold on to the writings, or collect those, too. You will want to return to these later to see what has changed through your work together. If at a later point, the group decides to share with other parents what it has learned and done, these initial writings will be a great way to document the changes.

Lesson Four

The Right To Ask and Be Heard

EFF Generative Skills
Convey ideas in writing
Cooperate with others
Advocate and influence
Reflect and evaluate
Take responsibility for learning

Objectives
To demonstrate to parents that they can come up with their own meaningful questions regarding their children's schooling.

To engage parents in prioritizing those questions.

Activity 1: What Is My Child Learning?*

Materials
Newsprint and markers for each small group

Suggested Process
Begin by letting students know the purpose of this lesson: to learn how to come up with effective questions (i.e., those to which they can get the specific answers they need).

Divide the class into small groups of three to four. Ask each group to "brainstorm" a list of questions they would ask to find out what their children are learning. You might want to walk around the room, making yourself available if a group needs your assistance. If you notice groups having discussions more than formulating questions, suggest they turn their comments into questions.

Next ask that each group look at their list and circle the three questions that seem most important. Let them know that here they are "prioritizing." From these, have them choose the one that most stands out. You can let them know that if they can't agree on the latter, they can just choose one to work on for now.

This next step is simply to have each group list more questions about the question they circled. This is called, "branching off." As an example, an initial question might be, "Is my child learning what s/he needs to get into a good college?" Questions about that question might include: "How is it decided whether or not my child gets into a college?" "Is there a test s/he has to pass?" "What is on the test?" "What *is* a good college?" "What kind of grades do you need to get a scholarship?" And so on.

As the small groups do their work, walk around the room and take note of some of the open- vs. close-ended questions they raise.

Have each group look at their new list and put a check next to the questions that could be answered with a "yes" or "no."

Explain the difference between close-ended and open-ended questions, the latter being those that lead to more information and dialogue. You might point to some of the examples you saw as you glanced at their newsprint pads.

Ask the groups to take some of their "yes" or "no" questions and turn them into open-ended ones.

Have each group quickly share their open-ended questions.

Have participants write down for the questions each one would particularly like to ask. Here, they are "prioritizing" again.

Activity 2: What Does My Child Need to Learn?*

Materials

Same as above

Suggested Process

To begin, ask the whole group to articulate the difference between the following two questions: "What is my child learning?" and "What does my child need to learn?"

Now, in the same small groups, ask participants to list the questions they would now ask to find out what their children *need to learn*.

Ask each group to put a check next to the three most important questions they came up with. Let them know they should be ready to explain to the rest of the class why they chose the ones they did.

Have each group share the three questions they chose and why.

Ask each student to take her list from the previous lesson and add the new questions she would like answers to.

To wrap up, elicit responses to the following question: "What do you think your child would like you to ask her teacher?" After allowing time to hear initial responses, suggest each parent ask his or her child that question before your next class, and bring in their answers.

Activity 3: A Final Set of Questions (For Now)

Suggested Process

Ask students to share their children's questions.

Ask the students to review the questions they raised in Activities 1 and 2, adding their children's questions.

Ask, "What other questions would you ask your child's teacher if s/he were here right now?" and have them add these.

Be sure to collect a copy of the final set of questions from each group. You will be using these in Lesson Five.

Let them know the next lesson will begin to look at how to get answers.

Extension

Review the Right Question Project technique for formulating questions: brainstorm, prioritize, branch off, and prioritize again. Ask the group if there are other concerns for which they might use this process.

*Activities 1 and 2 are adapted from The Right Question Project. See "References" at the end of ***Part 2: Advocating for School Success***.

Lesson Five

Getting What You Need

EFF Generative Skills
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Advocate and influence
Solve problems and make decisions
Reflect and evaluate

Objective
To develop strategies that help parents get their questions answered.

Role Play I

Materials
For each student: copies of "Feliz Nuñez" (unless you are writing it on the board instead), and five 3x5 notecards

Suggested Process
Create a space at the front of the room for the role play to be acted out.
Hand out copies of Feliz Nuñez, or write it on the board.

Feliz Nuñez

Time: 7:30 a.m. Monday morning
Place: Villa de Adobe Middle School

Situation: Feliz Nuñez arrives for a scheduled meeting with her daughter Fransisca's seventh-grade math teacher, Mr. Ross. Having excelled at math until now, Fransisca's math grades suddenly dropped when she entered seventh grade, and Feliz wants to discuss this. The teacher arrives ten minutes late and without the schoolwork he had agreed to bring. He is interrupted several times during the twenty minutes they have left to meet before Feliz has to leave for work.

Ask everyone to take their note cards and jot down five things that might be going through Feliz's head during this meeting. Ask them to do the same for the math teacher on the reverse side of each card.

Ask for two volunteers to act out this situation. Before they begin, tell the volunteers that if either of them feels really stuck at some point, he can ask others who want to jump into the role to raise their hands, and he can tap someone to take his place.

To debrief the role play, you might use questions like the following: What kind of relationship did Feliz have with the teacher? Who was in charge in this situation? If it was the teacher, how could Feliz have been more in control?

Role Play II

Materials

For each student: Three 3x5 notecards for each role play to be acted out in class. (This will depend on how many small groups you had during Lesson Four. Each will come up with its own role play.) Also, the final set of questions they had at the end of Lesson Four.

Suggested Process

Have the same small groups that met in Lesson Four get together again. Ask them to review the questions they ended up with in Lesson Four.

Have them choose one question to turn into the cornerstone of a role play.

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Ask each group to come up with the characters needed for this role play. Who is the parent? Who does s/he need to talk to for an answer to this question? Are there other people involved in this situation? (Someone to accompany the parent, for example?) You might want to walk around the room, encouraging each group to develop as full a character as possible for each role.

Ask each group to come up with a time and a place for this role play, and to decide who will play each role. Give them five minutes to develop and practice before presenting to the class. Check to see if they need more time when the time is up.

After each role play, have everyone take three notecards and jot down three things they learned from it. After each group has presented, ask everyone to choose one notecard to share with the class.

To wrap up, you may want to ask for responses to, "What did you learn today and how will you use it?"

Extensions

At some point in a role play, you might freeze the action and ask everyone to take a piece of paper and write what they imagine will happen next. Let them know a few lines could do it, or they might need a page—it doesn't matter. Then use these writings as the basis for further discussion. Note: If you think you might want to try this, be sure to let the class know ahead of time that you may stop the action.

Another idea is for the class to take a role play and create a *fotonovela* out of it (a story told in photographs with balloon captions) for other ESL classes or parents' groups. You might let the class know about this possibility now, to be further explored in "Sharing What We've Learned And Evaluating Our Work."

Lesson Six

De-Coding the School

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Convey ideas in writing
Take responsibility for learning

Objectives
To demystify the policies that affect children in school.

To learn to critically read a policy handbook and report card.

To generate further questions about what's happening in children's school.

Activity 1

Materials
For each student: a copy of your school district's policy handbook, which will have different titles in different districts. For example, in Albuquerque it's called the "Student Behavior Handbook," even though it lists students' rights, as well as district rules. (If you're not sure where to get a copy, begin with the general phone number for the local school board.) In areas with significant Latino populations, it should be available in both Spanish and English.

Suggested Process
Before you begin this lesson, take one copy of the handbook and divide each section into smaller sections. This activity is sometimes called, "chunking." Simply place a number at the beginning of each chunk you create. It doesn't necessarily matter where you create the separate chunks; your goal is simply to break long passages of text into smaller bits for students to read one at a time. (Note: Sometimes this will already be done for you. "Suspension" in the Albuquerque Student Behavior handbook, for instance, is already divided into shorter sections on "Short-Term Suspension," "Long-term Suspension,"

"Maximum Term of Suspension," and "Expulsion.")

Create identical chunks in each copy of the handbook. If you are using English versions of the handbook, review "About Vocabulary" following the Introduction *to Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action* before class starts.

Have students review the Table of Contents and choose one section they would like to investigate. This activity will be most effective if people work collaboratively. Have people agree to team up on a section, so they are working in pairs or small groups. Suggest the following steps for students to use when they come to a word that looks unfamiliar:

1) Ignore the word, and keep reading!

2) OK, sometimes that's a hard thing to expect. Suggest that if they can't ignore the word, they underline it. That way, they can return to the word later, but let it go just for now.

3) Suggest that when they are finished with the reading, they go back to any underlined word and jot down in the margins their guess about what it means.

4) Let them know the class can discuss any words they want after the reading is completed.

5) Most importantly, acknowledge up front that the handbook is written in "official" language. It may be very helpful here to facilitate a discussion about the times they have encountered "official" language before, and why they believe institutions use it. The discussion will go a long way toward diminishing the feelings of inadequacy people might otherwise have as they read the policy handbook.

Ask everyone to begin reading "chunk number one" of their section and then stop before going on to "chunk two." Ask them to jot down anything they don't understand about the first chunk. Have them share these with each other in their pairs or groups.

Now ask students to read "chunk two" and then stop. Again, have them jot down anything that isn't clear. But this time, also have them note any clarification they may have gotten from "chunk two" regarding their questions from "chunk one." Again, have them share what they jot down with members of their group.

Ask them to simply repeat this process as they move through their reading. When they are finished reading, ask them to share the information they learned and any confusion that remains, with the whole group. Take this opportunity to offer any clarification you are able to provide.

Let students know upcoming lessons (found in Lesson Nine of this section and also in ***Community Action***) will help them figure out whom to go to for responses to any questions that remain.

Activity 2

Materials

Ask each parent to bring in a copy of one child's report card.

Suggested Process

Have students work in pairs. Make sure that people without children in school, or those who forgot to bring in a report card, pair up with someone who has one. Ask each pair to list the questions they have as they look at the report cards.

Have students review their lists and turn any close-ended questions (the ones with "yes" or "no" answers) into open-ended ones. Now, have each individual circle the three most compelling questions on their list.

Suggest the parents in the class might use this same process with their children, to find out what *their* questions are about their own report cards.

Here, too, you may want to ask variations of "What did you learn today and how will you use it?" to wrap up the lesson.

Lesson Seven

Valentine Cupcakes and More — Parents Observe the Classroom

EFF Generative Skills
Observe critically
Reflect and evaluate

Objectives
To further establish parents' right to be directly involved in their children's academic success.

To move beyond a focus on students' own children to a look at what is happening for all the children in the class.

Materials
For each small group: a copy of the handout "How to Watch Your Child's Class," newsprint pad, and marker

Suggested Process
Let the group know the purpose of this activity is to provide those parents who want to, the support and guidelines to observe their child's classroom. Divide the class into small groups that include at least one parent with a school-age child. Give each group a copy of the handout "How to Watch Your Child's Class."

Ask each group to consider Sukey Blanc's questions. Which do they want to keep? Which would they omit? Ask them to be prepared to explain why for each one. What questions would they add?

Have one person from each group report back to the class on the questions they kept, those they added, and why. (When doing "report backs," it's always helpful to let the reporters know they have a specific amount of time. Then be sure to time them.)

If you have your own ideas about the importance of any of the questions from the handout "How To Watch Your Child's Class," feel free to share them with the group. Many adult education teachers are afraid of "imposing" their ideas on students. But if you have created a classroom atmosphere in which ideas are freely exchanged and authority is carried by students as well as the teacher, why shouldn't our ideas be put on the table to be considered, debated, accepted, or rejected—along with all the others? You do have a voice in the room, and it is one of many.

Have the small groups meet again to consider what they heard from others in the class and see if they want to make any changes in their list. After each group has established their own set of questions, find out if any parents want to observe their children's class. (Someone will probably mention this, but if not, be sure to suggest that they ask their kids how they feel about it first!) Find out if anyone who is not a parent would like to accompany a parent on the classroom visit. Then ask the parent who will observe a class to make a plan to contact their child's teacher to schedule a visit.

Note: Many school districts do require permission to visit a classroom, and some schools may have the right to deny permission in some situations.

How to Watch Your Child's Class

by Sukey Blanc

If you are interested in visiting your child's class, here is a list of questions to think about as you observe. These questions are general guidelines to highlight positive and negative classroom patterns.

What Activities are Students and Teacher Involved In?

- How much time is spent on teaching and learning?
- How much classroom time is taken up with discipline issues?
- Is there "active learning" going on? (Where students interact with each other and the teacher, and participate in experiences actively rather than listening passively, similar to the activities in this classroom!)
- Is the teacher using cooperative methods of teaching? (Where small groups or pairs work together on an assignment. Also similar to our class.)
- Are students reading, writing and talking about their ideas?

How Do the Teachers and Students Communicate with Each Other?

- Are the students and teacher respectful toward each other?
- Do students have an opportunity to ask questions and exchange ideas?
- Does the teacher listen seriously to students' opinions?
- Does the teacher single out individuals for criticism?

Handout

Who Talks in the Classroom?

- Do Latino students participate equally?
- What about African-American students? Asian students?
- Do boys and girls participate equally?
- Do students who have limited English skills get a chance to participate?

What Does the Classroom Look Like?

- Are examples of students' work displayed?
- Is there a classroom library?
- Are there computers?
- Are there hands-on materials for math and science? (Materials that encourage students to do something, not just read and answer questions.)
- Are there portraits of women and people of color in areas such as history, math and science?

How Are Students Seated?

- What kinds of students are seated where? Are students separated by race, gender, behavior, or academic performance?

Reprinted from *Philadelphia Public School Notebook*. See "References" at the end of "Advocating for School Success."

Lesson Eight

Hopes and Fears

EFF Generative Skills
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Reflect and evaluate
Take responsibility for learning

Objective
To establish personal and collective goals for becoming an education advocate, and to give open expression to the fears that could inhibit students from reaching their goals.

Materials
Six 3x5 notecards for each student. You will see below why it's important not to use notecards that are any bigger.

Notes on this lesson
Often, once we give full voice to our fears, they actually become diminished. Articulating them can also allow us to then see our hopes.

The exercises below become a link in a series of activities designed to extend students' thinking and create a rich discussion. First jotting ideas on small cards gets people to generate some initial ideas. Using 3x5 cards helps convey the message that these can be quick and need not be lengthy. Next, talking with another person provides a way to further focus on students' own ideas, and sometimes broaden them. Finally, having jotted some notes for themselves, and given voice to his or her ideas by sharing with another person, it becomes more likely that an individual will share his ideas in the large group.

Suggested Process

Ask everyone to jot down three fears on their index cards that come up when they think of advocating for their children in school. Here again, as with Lesson Three, "It's as If I Were Also a Student in the School," it's important to ask for three. (If you skipped it, please review suggested process for "It's As If..." before moving on.)

Repeat the process above, asking for three things they *hope for* in advocating for their children in school.

Ask students to turn to someone seated next to them to discuss their own hopes and fears together. In pairs, they can decide which is their one strongest hope, and their one strongest fear.

Now ask to hear each of the strongest fears back in the large group. After that, ask to hear each of the strongest hopes back in the large group.

Following the discussion, be sure to collect the cards with the most compelling hopes and fears. Let the group know you will be looking back later to see if any fears were realized, and which hopes were achieved.

Lesson Nine

Creating an Action Plan

EFF Generative Skills
Cooperate with others
Advocate and influence
Plan
Solve problems and make decisions
Reflect and evaluate

Objective
To help students create plans for getting answers to the questions they have raised so far, and establishing a relationship with their children's school.

Materials
Each participant's list of questions raised in previous lessons

Suggested Process
Ask each student to take a sheet of paper and divide it into four columns. At the top of each should read: Did/In the Next Week/In the Next Month/Before the Next School Year.

Have students work in pairs to help each other list the questions to which they will find answers in each column. Let them know they don't have to include every question on their original lists, just the ones they feel are most important.

Now list the following on the board:

Other Parent (OP)
Teacher (T)
Guidance Counselor (GC)
Principal (P)
Other (O)

Have students put one or more of the abbreviations above next to each question, noting whom they might go to for answers.

Ask everyone to share their plans. As people listen to others' plans, ask them to think about who they might work with to implement some ideas jointly. Let everyone know they can feel free to make the connections out loud as the plans are read.

Provide time for people to simply move around the room, meet with the people with whom they might collaborate, and revise their plans as such.

Hand out the free writing exercises done in Lesson One. Ask everyone to read them and now write about how their thoughts have changed.

Victory Stories

New York Plan Allows Parents to Grade Teachers

Parents in Rochester, New York are the first in the country with the formal authority to take part in teacher evaluations. All parents are asked to respond to a questionnaire which asks for their input on issues such as the following: Do teachers contact parents with concerns about performance in class or attendance? Does the teacher welcome classroom visits? Their comments affect one out of the four areas in which teachers are evaluated, home involvement. Parent feedback helps to identify those teachers who deserve praise in this area, as well as those who need to improve their efforts. School districts in Alaska will be including parent and community input into the evaluations of both teachers and administrators.

Information from the *Philadelphia Public School Notebook*. See "References" at the end of ***Part 2: Advocating for School Success***

Cleveland Parents Paid to Visit the Classroom!

While many parents face opposition at work when they need time off to meet with their children's teachers, parents in Cleveland have no problem. In fact, they are paid for their time. Parent/Family Day is a special day in the Cleveland Public Schools when family members are invited to talk with teachers and other school staff, and see what a school day is like. As a result of the combined efforts of parents, community groups and the teachers' union, more than 100 Cleveland employers provide paid time off to attend. According to one union staff member, parents made the argument that "parent involvement is similar to jury duty, in that parents have a right and responsibility to be involved in their child's education, and that an employer has an obligation to allow parents to carry out those duties."

Information from *Rethinking Schools*, Spring, 1993. See "References" at the end of ***Part 2: Advocating for School Success***

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Educating Our Children

Part 3: Changing Our Schools

A Note About Part 3

(Latino students) quit school because . . . we are too smart to believe that we can be part of a group that tries to make us forget we are Latinos, and so we leave, thinking that's the way to make a difference.
Amarilis Chavez, *United Youth of Boston*

Whether it's attacks on bilingual education, textbooks that omit Latino history and a Latino perspective, testing procedures that screen immigrant children out of Gifted and Talented programs, or discipline procedures that unfairly target students of color, Latino students often face schools that, at best, do not respect them. If they graduate, they enter a world in which high school graduates of color who do not go on to college are less likely to find work than White youth who drop out of high school.

Maybe the surprise is not that the Latino high school drop-out rate is 30%, but that 70% of Latino youth find a way to remain in school.* They remain because of support and encouragement from family, because of parents and youth who have organized for school change, and because there *are* teachers, administrators and innovative programs around the country committed to their academic success.

Part 3: Changing Our Schools highlights two issues central to the struggles Latino youth face in school: bilingual education and tracking. In addition, it offers information for lessons you may want to create covering issues that range from testing practices to grade retention. The victory stories at the end of "Changing Our Schools" describe the changes youth, parents, and school staff are creating. ***Community Action***, the last section of *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action*, will help you and your students consider the changes *you* would like to make.

* These rates are based on 1995 US Census Data, and are probably conservative. Other estimates are much higher.

Lesson One

Find Someone Who...

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Convey ideas in writing
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Use mathematics in problem-solving and communication
Learn through research
Reflect and evaluate

Objective
To elicit varied school experiences of Latino youth, as told by the parents in the room.

Materials
For each participant: a copy of the handout "Find Someone Who . . ." and a pen

Suggested Process
Distribute copies of the handout "Find Someone Who... " to students and give them a moment to review it. Then, ask everyone to circulate around the room, looking for someone who fits into each category described. Ask them to pause and hear the story that particular person has to tell.

After listening to each story, ask students to write down the important points they remember in just a few words. Remind them not to try writing as they listen.

As the circulating winds down, have everyone come back to their seats. First find out how many people fit into each category by a show of hands. Then ask to hear stories from at least one person in each.

As preparation for doing their own research and documenting it in ***Community Action***, ask students to tally the number of people in each category, and create a graph based on the class data.

Find Someone Who. . .

Has a child who graduated high school and entered a two-year college.

Name

Notes

Has a child who graduated high school and entered a four-year college.

Name

Notes

Has a child who was harassed at school because of his/her race.

Name

Notes

Has a child who was held back a grade.

Name

Notes

Has a child who had a positive experience in special education.

Name

Notes

Handout

Has a child who had a negative experience in special education.	Name Notes
Has a child in a Gifted and Talented program.	Name Notes
Has a child who has had a positive experience in a bilingual program.	Name Notes
Has a child who has had a negative experience in a bilingual program.	Name Notes
Has a child who was taught Latino history in school.	Name Notes
Has a child who has a Latino teacher.	Name Notes

Lesson Two

Bilingual Education: Our Own Experiences and Attitudes

EFF Generative Skills
Reflect and evaluate
Take responsibility for learning

Objective
To elicit students' experiences with or attitudes toward bilingual education, or the lack of it, and begin to raise questions about bilingual education.

Suggested Process
This activity uses a web. Place the words "bilingual education" in the middle of the board. Ask students to call out whatever comes to mind when they think of bilingual education. For each idea they suggest, ask them for additional ideas that sprout off of it, creating something that looks like a spider web.

Offer a summary of everyone's experiences and attitudes, as evidenced by the web. Ask students to help you create a collective list of questions the group has about bilingual education.

Lesson Three

Mother Tongue

EFF Generative Skills
Reflect and evaluate

Objective
To reflect on the role of language in identity.

Note: Use any of the following three activities.

Materials
Three 3x5 notecards for each participant

Activity 1

Suggested Process

1) Place the following words on the board:

Cuando me imaginaba como abuela, nunca pensé que nietos míos no iban a poder hablarme. Pero ellos no hablan el "mexicano" y aunque yo entiendo el inglés, no entienden mi "acento".

Translation:
When I imagined myself as a grandmother, I never thought that my grandchildren would not be able to talk with me. But they don't speak "Mexican" and even though I understand English, they don't understand my "accent."

2) Ask students to jot down three reactions to these words, one on each notecard.

3) Have them share these in pairs, deciding which is the strongest reaction they have to share with the group.

4) Facilitate a group discussion.

Activity 2

Use the same materials and process as above, but with the words, "Who is to say that robbing a people of its language is less violent than war?" (Ray Gwyn Smith, in ***Anzaldua***, 1987).

Activity 3

Have student create a web again, this time with the words "mother tongue." Use the suggested process in Lesson Two.

Lesson Four

What is Bilingual Education?

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Reflect and evaluate

Objective
To provide information on bilingual education and children's language rights.

Materials
There are seven handouts, a questionnaire called "What Do You Think?" and six readings.

"Are Bilingual Kids Smarter?"
"What is Bilingual Education?"
"Language Rights of Children"
"What Happened in California"
"Suggestions for Helping Children to Learn the Home Language and English"
"Rights of Undocumented Families in Public Schools"

Provide additional copies of the readings for any student who wants them.

Suggested Process

Pass out the questionnaire "What Do You Think?" Students can work individually, in pairs, or in small groups to answer the questions.

Facilitate a discussion of the answers. Then ask each participant to choose *one* of the first five readings to complete in class.

Find out who would change any of their answers based on what they have read, and why.

Refer to the class list of questions generated in Lesson Two or Lesson Three, Activity 3, and ask if any of their questions were answered by the readings.

Make sure to give students a copy of readings they are interested in but chose not to read in class.

Extension

Be sure to hand out "Rights of Undocumented Families in Public Schools" as it may apply to your students or to people they know. Allow time for reading and discussion.

What Do You Think?

Please write "Yes," "No," or "I Don't Know" on the line next to each statement.

_____ Being bilingual can help children to do better in math.

_____ Children who speak two languages score higher on English language tests.

_____ Children who receive bilingual education are more likely to drop out of school.

_____ It takes most children two years to learn the kind of English needed to succeed in school.

_____ If you want your child to learn Spanish, speak to him or her in Spanish, even if s/he is too young to understand you.

_____ Learning to read and write in Spanish can help you learn to read and write more quickly in English.

Are Bilingual Kids Smarter?

Research shows that:

- Bilingualism can help children to do better in math.
- Bilingual children are likely to score higher on language tests (in English) than children who speak only English.
- Bilingual children are more likely to do better in general reasoning tests than children who speak only one language.
- Children who speak more than one language are more likely to understand how language works. This is very important for school work.
- Bilingual children are more likely to have a good self-image than children who do not share their parents' language.
- While most students can learn to ***speak*** English with two years of bilingual instruction, it takes most students from four to seven years to ***read***, ***write***, and ***understand*** English well enough to be successful in their school work.
- The earlier a child becomes bilingual, the easier it is to become fully fluent in both languages.
- Bilingual children often understand concepts much earlier—what words like love, journey, holiday mean. They are able to explore the meaning of these words in at least two languages.
- Dual language development improves literacy skills.

Adapted from *Bilingual Children: A guide for parents and carers* by F. Savitzky. See 'References' at the end of ***Part 3: Changing Our Schools***

What is Bilingual Education?

What is Bilingual Education?
The name "bilingual education" can be a little confusing. Not all bilingual education programs look alike. There are several different methods for teaching English to non-native speakers. A school usually decides which method it will use. In some classrooms, more than one of these methods is used. In others, no methods are used.

In very simple terms, there are three different goals of bilingual education programs, depending on which method is used:

1. Some programs teach every class in two languages so that students can speak, read, write, and understand both.
2. Some programs help maintain a student's native language while eventually transitioning to all English instruction.
3. Some programs replace a student's native language with English as quickly as possible.

The following describes the different methods that are used.

Dual Language Bilingual Programs (also called "bilingual immersion")
In this program, all students develop literacy skills in their native language while at the same time learning English. From kindergarten to first grade, most of the instruction (about 90 to 100%) is in the student's native language. From the second to the sixth grade, more and more English is used in the classroom. Studies have shown that students in dual-language programs from kindergarten though 12th grade score higher than native English speakers on standardized tests. One reason for this may be that bilingual students can think in two languages.

Two-Way Bilingual Programs (A variation of the dual language program)
Two-way bilingual programs put children who speak English only in the same classroom with students who are learning English. English-speaking and Spanish-speaking children learn together to read, write, and study all subjects in both languages. The goal of two-way bi ingual programs is to make all children in the program bilingual.

Developmental Bilingual Programs (also called "maintenance" or "late exit")
Research shows that it is easier for a student to learn to read in English if he/she already knows how to read in his/her native language. Developmental Bilingual programs help students to build and maintain native language skills so they can transfer those skills more easily to English. From kindergarten through fifth or sixth grades, students learn all content area subjects (including

Handout

math, science, and social studies) in English half of the day, and in their native language the other half.

Transitional Bilingual Programs (also called "early exit")

In this model, the students receive initial instruction primarily in the native language, with increasing amounts of instruction in English, and transitioning to all English classrooms in about two or three years.

English as a Second Language (ESL) or English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Children are taught English language skills in special ESL classes. The child's native language may be used for translation purposes, but all instruction is in English. These programs are usually pull-out programs, in which students spend from a few hours a week to half a day with an ESL teacher. The remainder of the day is spent either in mainstream (all English) classrooms or in other types of bilingual programs.

English "Submersion"

This is the sink-or-swim approach - NOT a program or method, but unfortunately a reality for many students. Limited-English proficient students are put in mainstream classrooms with no ESL or bilingual teacher and no language support. Because these students are often learning to read for the first time ever, they lack the ability to transfer native language literacy skills to English. English submersion can result in students learning to speak "playground English" quickly but falling behind academically in all subject areas.

This method is not in compliance with U.S. federal standards defined as a result of the ***Lau* v. *Nichols*** Supreme Court decision which determined that all students have a right to education that is appropriate for their needs.

Adapted from School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students by V. Collier and W. Thomas, 1997. National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. See "References" at the end of ***Part 3: Changing Our Schools***.

Language Rights of Children

Every school district in the country has a legal responsibility to meet the language needs of your child. *At a minimum*, it must provide the special help of a trained teacher so that your child can learn English. It *also* must provide special help so that your child learns what other children are learning, even if your child speaks little or no English. Some states require schools to provide more support, such as bilingual programs.

What to Watch For:

- "Bilingual" classrooms with teachers who are not bilingual and not certified in bilingual education or English as a Second Language instruction.
- Classrooms where teacher aides or assistants do much of the teaching of English language learners.
- ESL classes which are really regular English classes, and where English language learners fall behind because they do not understand the instructions.
- Schools where there are good materials for English instruction, but inferior materials for instruction in Spanish.
- Schools where English language learners consistently achieve at a lower level than native English speakers.
- Schools where English language learners are forced to take tests in English.
- Schools where English language learners are excluded from school-wide, district-wide, or nationwide testing.

Civil Rights Act, Title VI

"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin...be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Handout

Handout

Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA)

"No state shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex or national origin, by...the failure of an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs."

Some Questions to Ask About Language Rights

Here are some questions to ask when choosing a school:

- What type or types of bilingual education programs does the school offer?
- Are students taught by certified teachers or teaching assistants? Are the teachers certified in ESL or Bilingual Education? Are the teachers bilingual? If so, in what languages? If not, is a teaching assistant provided for translation purposes?
- Does the bilingual education program provide instruction in the native language in content areas like math, science, and social studies?
- Are bilingual education students achieving at rates similar to English-speaking students?
- Do bilingual education students participate in school-wide testing? Are accommodations made for this? Or do they participate in alternative assessments?
- Do bilingual education students have access to elective classes and extra-curricular activities?
- Does the school provide newsletters, notices, and other communication to parents in a language they understand? Are interpreters provided at PTA/PTO/PTSO meetings?
- Are students really spending the required amount of time in English language instruction? Are they spending the required amount of time in other content areas?
- How does the school determine whether a student will be placed in a bilingual or ESL program?
- How does the school determine when a student no longer needs to be in a bilingual or ESL program?

What Happened in California

Recently, California voters approved Proposition 227, eliminating bilingual education in that state. Proposition 227 restricts limited English-proficient students to only one year (180 school days) in an ESL or "sheltered English" program before moving them into English-only classrooms. People opposed to bilingual education are pushing for similar changes in Arizona, Colorado, Washington, and Massachusetts.

Supporters of Proposition 227 present themselves as advocates for Latino children against ineffective bilingual programs that aren't teaching them English. In their view, the solution is to limit the amount of time students spend in bilingual classes, with the aim of transferring all students to English-language classes after one school year. Opponents of Proposition 227 disapprove of the rigid time limits within which students are expected to become fluent in English, based on research that shows that even though children learn "playground English" quickly, it takes four years or more for students to become proficient in English, and to learn the kind of English needed for school success.

Opponents of Proposition 227 believe that bilingual education is the best strategy to make sure that students learn English while keeping up with other coursework. They blame under-funding, lack of qualified teachers, and inappropriate testing for programs that are not effective and have given bilingual education a bad reputation. In fact, they point out that many of these programs are not actually "bilingual" and are usually sheltered instruction programs.

Those who support quality bilingual education point to successful programs such as the one run by the Calexico Unified School District, one of the poorest counties in the state of California. In Calexico, 98% of kindergartners enter school knowing little or no English, but by fourth grade, almost all are in English classrooms. More than 80% of the district graduates go on to college. (NCLR 1998)

More information about the Calexico bilingual education program . . .

- The Calexico Unified School District was one of the first to implement a full bilingual curriculum in each of its schools in the 1970's.
- All students must pass an English proficiency test and complete a senior project in order to graduate.
- The dropout rate is less than one half of the national average for Latino students.

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Suggestions for Helping Children to Learn the Home Language and English

- Always talk to your child in your native language. Even when the child is too young to understand, talk to him or her about what you are doing when you are cooking, writing, shopping, and engaging in other daily activities.

- Teach your child nursery rhymes and songs in your native language.

- Tell your child stories in your native language. Encourage your child to join in with the storytelling.

- Read stories in your native language, or have your child read them to you.

- Talk to your children about what they did at daycare or school in your native language. If they use English words, repeat what they have said using your native language.

- Don't be afraid to use your native language in public. Some people may feel uncomfortable around unfamiliar languages, but this should not limit the way you communicate with your children.

- Take your child to concerts, plays, poetry readings, films, and other events where they will hear people using their native language.

- Encourage your children to play and interact with children who speak the same language as they do.

Adapted from *Bilingual children: A guide for parents and carers* by T. Savitzky. See "References" at the end of **Part 3: Changing Our Schools**

Handout

Rights of Undocumented Families in Public Schools

In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Plyer v. Doe* that undocumented children and youth have the same right to attend public elementary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Like other children, undocumented students are required under state laws to attend school until they reach legal age.

As a result of this ruling, public schools may not:

- Deny admission to a student at any time because they are undocumented
- Do anything to keep undocumented children from going to school
- Require students or parents to provide documentation of their immigration status
- Ask questions of students or parents that may reveal their undocumented status
- Require social security numbers from any student as a condition of admission to school

Students without social security numbers should be assigned an identification number generated by the school. Adults without social security numbers who are applying for a free lunch/breakfast program for a student need only to state on the application that they do not have a social security number.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits schools from providing any outside agency—including the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service—with any information from a child's school file that would expose the student's undocumented status without first getting permission from the student's parents. The only exception to this is if an agency gets a court order—or subpoena—that parents can then legally challenge. No school personnel has the legal obligation to enforce U.S. immigration laws.

Handout '99

Handout

For more information in English or Spanish, or to report violations of these rights, contact:

National Coalition of Advocates for Students
1-800-441-7192 (Nationwide)

Multicultural Education Training and Advocacy, Inc. (META)
(617) 628-2226 (Nationwide)
(415) 546-6382 (California)

New York Immigration Hotline
(718) 899-4000 (Nationwide)

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)
(213) 629-2512 (California and national office)
(312) 782-1422 (Illinois)
(210) 224-5476 (Texas)

Adapted from 1998 flyer by the National Coalition of Advocates for Students. Available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Vietnamese, and Khmer. See "References" at the end of *Part 3: Changing Our Schools*.

Lesson Five

The Garbage Patrol

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Reflect and evaluate

Objectives
To generate students' initial thinking and discussion about tracking.

To serve as a pre-reading activity for *What Is Tracking?* in Lesson Six.

Materials
For each student: a copy of the handout "The Garbage Patrol". You can also write it on the board for everyone to see, if that is easier.

Suggested Process
This lesson uses an activity called "free speaking." It allows each individual to see what's on their mind about what they've read.

Before they read the handout "The Garbage Patrol", divide the group into pairs, with one partner being Person A and one being Person B. You can participate in a pair, too, unless there are already an even number of students.

Ask everyone to read "The Garbage Patrol". Let them know that this reading is meant to serve as a springboard for discussion, not as a general description of special education.

As people finish reading, give the following directions to the group. Person A will talk for three minutes about their reactions to what they just read. During this time, Person B will *just* listen. Their goal is to listen very well, encouraging Person A to keep talking, without asking questions or interrupting. They might nod, or smile, or lean forward or even say "Uh huh". They just can't interrupt. Let the group know this will be hard, as the listener will want to talk too. Make sure to tell them there will be time for that later. Right now the goal is to help the speaker see what is on *his* mind. Let them know Persons A and B will switch roles after three minutes. Check in to see if there are any questions before you begin.

When everyone is ready, say "Go," and start timing.

After three minutes, say "OK, Please switch."

When time is up, debrief this activity in two parts. First, ask about the *process* of "free speaking." The questions you use might include: "How did it feel to just listen?" "How was it to talk uninterrupted for three minutes?" "What was beneficial about this activity?" "How should we do it differently if we use it again?" Next, ask the group, "OK, what were your reactions to 'The Garbage Patrol?'"

If questions about special education emerge as the group is talking, be sure to list them on the board, so you can come back to them during the additional reading and discussion in Lesson Eight.

The Garbage Patrol

I was walking on a middle school playground. The kids were dropping candy wrappers and other garbage. I said to them, "Hey, don't litter the playground." They said, "Don't worry, the special ed kids will pick it up."

This school actually had certain kids picking up garbage on a regular basis as part of the school program. And, it had other kids who thought themselves superior. When I complained, school officials told me the special ed kids would be doing these types of jobs, that it was good training.

Reprinted from the National Coalition of Education Activists *Maintaining Inequality: A background packet on tracking and ability grouping*. See "References" at the end of ***Part 3: Changing Our Schools***.

Lesson Six

What is Tracking?

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Convey ideas in writing
Reflect and evaluate

Objectives
To provide information on tracking and stimulate students' initial thoughts on how it relates to themselves or their children.

To serve as a lead-in to the handout to "Is My Child Being Tracked?" in Lesson Seven.

Materials
For each student: a copy of the handout "What is Tracking?"

Suggested Process
Introduce the reading by telling the group that in it, they will read about "low-track" students, of whom many teachers have as low expectations as the special education kids in *The Garbage Patrol*.

This lesson uses a variation on the "chunking strategy" found in Lesson Six of ***Part 2: Advocating for School Success***. This time, the reading is already divided into three chunks.

Have students work in small groups of three or four. Ask them to begin reading *What is Tracking?* and then stop when they finish chunk number one.

Ask each individual to jot down two questions they have based on what they read. Have the group share and discuss these.

Lesson Plan

Then ask everyone to read chunk number two, then jot down any answers they found, and write down two new questions. Again, have them share these in their groups.

Repeat the process with chunk number three.

Now ask each individual to jot down their overall reaction to this reading. Share these in the large group.

Extension

You may want to show students how to create graphs based on the statistics given in this reading. This will help them prepare for presenting their own research in ***Community Action.***

What is Tracking?

1. Tracking is the process by which students are divided into educational categories and assigned to groups for various kinds of classes. Students are placed in tracks based on teachers' recommendations, estimates of what students have already learned, and their perceived potential for learning more.

   Tracking decisions can also be based on students' scores on standardized tests. Studies have shown that top-track students spend more time on learning, while students in low tracks spend more time on discipline and behavior. Top track students are expected to do more homework. Low-track students are often expected to follow directions, be on time, and sit quietly.

   Immigrant students often have a higher chance of being placed in low tracks. One reason is that some teachers characterize immigrant students or English language learners as being "slow" or "low achieving" based solely on a perceived difference from mainstream students. Another reason is that poor and minority students consistently score lower on standardized tests than do White, non-immigrant students. Researchers have proven that children do better on test questions that relate to their lives, and some tests have been proven to be culturally-biased. This means that White, middle- class children are most likely to do well on these tests because their language and experiences are more compatible with the test questions. On the other hand, there are very few test questions that relate to immigrant children's experiences on standardized tests. (Oakes, 1985)

2. What track a student is placed in is determined by the students' *perceived* ability: the tracking process does not look at each student's full range of strengths and potential. Yet tracking can start as soon as kindergarten! Once a child is in a low track, it is very hard to get out. They often stay there through high school.

3. High school students who take one or more years of Algebra are more likely to go to college than those who take none. One study looked at Charlestown High School in Boston, where a majority of students were Latino and African-American. Four out of 44 students in Algebra I/Trigonometry were African-American. None were Latino. The same proportions were found in other majority Latino and African-American high schools in Boston. (Ribadeneira, 1990). Proportions such as these raise questions about schools' expectations of children of color.

Handout

Across the country in 1990, 28% of 17 year-old Latinos in high school were enrolled in classes that prepared them for college, this compared to 37% of African-Americans, and 46% of Whites. (NCLR 1997) In Texas, for example, Latina high school students are frequently tracked into cosmetology classes. Even when they score well on standardized tests, Latinos are less likely to be placed in advanced classes such as calculus. (McKay, 1996)

*"Standardized" means the same test is given to every student, under the same conditions, in a given school district or state. Most of the tests contain multiple choice questions, and are graded by a computer that allows only one right answer.

Lesson Seven

Is My Child Being Tracked?

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Observe critically
Cooperate with others
Advocate and influence
Resolve conflict and negotiate
Plan

Objectives
To determine if the children of students in the class are being tracked.

To provide strategies for addressing student concerns if their children are being tracked.

Materials
For each student: a copy of the handout "Is My Child Being Tracked?", "What You Can Do", and "The Alternative to Tracking"

Suggested Process
Ask everyone to answer the questions in "Is My Child Being Tracked?" They may do this individually or in pairs. Point out that these are some sample indicators of tracking.

Discuss the answers in the large group before asking everyone to read the handouts "What You Can Do", and "The Alternative to Tracking".

Facilitate discussion based on the latter two readings. Find out if there are parents who want to make a plan to address concerns about their children's tracking. What do they want to do? Is there someone they can collaborate with? What kind of support do they want from the group?

Is My Child Being Tracked?

Elementary School

Yes No

Is your child with the same children year after year?

(Not a concern if your child's school is small)

Are children divided into "ability" groups during math or reading time?

(Often the groups have names like "tigers," "panthers," and "bluebirds," instead of "high," "middle," and "low.")

Middle and High School

Is your child taking lower-track classes?

("General," "Developmental," "Basic," and "Beginning" in class titles often mean lower track. Or a class might have the letter A, B or C in front of it. Section A may be the only one that prepares students to later take classes needed for college.)

Is your child enrolled in college preparatory courses?

(For example, will he or she take algebra by the 9th grade?)

Handout

Handout

All Ages

	Yes	No
Do most classes have a racial or ethnic mix similar to the whole school? (For example, if the school is 1/3 Latino, are most of the classes 1/3 Latino or are all the Latino and minority students together?)		
Do most classes have more or less equal numbers of girls and boys?		
Does your child's teacher know his or her weaknesses and strengths and have a plan for addressing them over the course of the academic year?		
What kind of homework does your child have? Ask questions if s/he: Has no homework. Gets a lot of work sheets. Is not reading whole stories or books. Has lots of multiple choice questions instead of essays.		

Adapted from the National Coalition of Education Activists' *Maintaining inequality: A background packet on tracking and ability grouping*. See "References" at the end of ***Part 3: Changing Our Schools***.

What You Can Do

Elementary
If your child is in a lower-level reading or math group, insist that there be an explanation of why s/he is placed there. There must also be a plan—and a target date—for moving him or her into a higher level.

Middle or High School
If you are told your child is not prepared for a certain class, find out how s/he can get prepared. If necessary, insist that the school provide extra help.

All Ages
Insist on being involved in any decision regarding tracking.

Insist that any test be given in Spanish in all subjects until English is mastered.

Make sure that students are not spending most of their time in class doing worksheets, and that they are receiving adequate attention and instruction from the teacher.

Adapted from the National Coalition of Education Activists' *Maintaining inequality: A background packet on tracking and ability grouping*. See "References" at the end of ***Part 3: Changing Our Schools***.

The Alternative to Tracking

Here are some things that can make non-tracked classrooms work well for all students:

Learning Through Themes

Classwork is organized around themes, rather than unconnected skills. Students in New Mexico, for example, might study the Rio Grande River through reading and writing, while at the same time developing science skills, and learning about history and economics. Each of these skills comes to life as students look at their families' relationship to the river, now and in the past. When the skills are connected to a real-life theme, they are easier to learn and use, and students are more motivated.

Learning Cooperatively

Class activities promote and encourage students to work together in groups and give students a chance to learn from each other. They also may build on many students' cultural orientation to work cooperatively. There is evidence that cooperative learning can boost students' self-esteem, enhance their relationships with their peers, and increase their interest in school and learning.

Learning Actively

Students are given active learning tasks. They interact with each other and with the teacher, and participate in experiences, rather than listening passively to the teacher or filling out worksheets. Teachers use instructional games, field trips, experiments and projects that challenge students to create, do their own research, and develop leadership skills.

Lesson Eight

Special Education

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Convey ideas in writing
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Observe critically
Advocate and influence

Objectives
To provide students with information on special education.

To prepare parents to participate in the process of evaluating if their children should be placed in special education.

Materials
For each student: a copy of the handout "Special Education"

Suggested Process
Have each student take a blank sheet of paper, hold it horizontally, and create four columns.

In the first column, ask them to jot down everything they know about special education.

When they are finished, ask them to write down what they *want* to know about special education in the second column. Let them know that as they review the first column, they may realize they're not completely sure about something in it, and it can become a question for the second.

Have everyone read the handout "Special Education", looking for answers to their questions, and jotting them down in the third column, along with any new questions in the fourth.

Find out if there are four or five people who have had direct experience with special education—either as a parent or as a student—and would serve as members of a panel, to talk a little about their experiences and answer questions. You might want to be on the lookout for people to serve on the panel in the days before you do this lesson. But be aware that the reading itself may motivate people to want to participate!

You may help the panel members get started by asking them how the reading relates to their experiences.

Make a group list of any questions that remain, to be considered in later lessons in ***Community Action***.

Special Education

Children with limited English are sometimes wrongly identified as learning disabled or mentally retarded because of language and cultural differences. Sometimes, normal mistakes made in the process of learning English are seen as evidence of a learning disability. Having a hard time paying attention, or following directions—which are often cited as signs of learning disabilities—may actually be the result of a student's difficulty understanding the teacher's English. In addition, standardized tests based on a foreign language and culture result in lower scores for immigrant children. This further contributes to the likelihood that they will be placed in special education classes.

Students' Rights

The evaluation team that decides if a child needs to be placed in special education classes should include bilingual and bicultural staff. A student's language skills must be assessed in order to determine his or her primary language. Evaluation should then be done in the student's primary language by someone who is *fluent* in it. If that is not possible, a *trained* interpreter must participate in the assessment. The assessment should not rely on standardized tests alone, but should also include school work, class participation, and the degree to which a child has improved upon his or her skills. Interviews with the student, parent, teachers, and other school staff should always be included as part of the process.

The teacher should provide evidence that a wide variety of teaching methods in the regular classroom were tried.

Clear, short-term goals should be set, with a target date for moving the student out of special education. As the date gets near, the child's situation should be evaluated to see if progress is being made.

Schools are required to seek out students for Gifted and Talented programs from varying language, economic, and cultural backgrounds. Again, this means that schools can't rely only on standardized tests, and schools are required to have a person who knows the student's cultural group *well* participate in the evaluation.

Handout

Handout

Parents' Rights

Parents must receive notice in their home language *before* a child is evaluated or re-evaluated for special education. Parents must also receive information in their home language about the evaluation process, and about the special education program. *Finally, schools must have permission from the parent before an evaluation or placement can take place.*

At the meeting to talk about the child's placement, there must be an interpreter who is familiar with special education, so that the parent can participate fully in the discussion of her child's education. It is illegal for school staff to ask questions about the family's legal status in the U.S.

The special education process is complicated, and the school staff may use terms parents are unfamiliar with. Parents may want to take a friend with them to any meetings at the school. Even if the person does not speak, just having someone they know is on their side can offer moral support. In these meetings, parents will be asked to sign legal documents. If possible, parents may even want to have an attorney there with them.

Other School Issues Related to Latino Students

The following is a very brief overview of other significant issues facing Latino students, and the adults who care about them. It is written to provide you, the teacher, with information that might inspire you to create your own lessons, similar to those in *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action*. While the information presented may appear overwhelming, know that there *are* alternatives and solutions to be found across the country. See the "Resources" section for ways you and your students can access more information, and learn about how others are addressing these issues.

Anti-Bias Training for Teachers

Eighty-eight percent of all public school teachers are White. (Piana, 1999) While many have the best of intentions, many also carry negative stereotypes of students of color and their parents, blaming the "home environment" for the reasons children don't succeed in school. Teachers' low expectations of students become one of the most significant reasons kids don't do well. The attitude reflected in the following quote can be seen over and over in well-meaning teachers:

"I feel so bad for these kids. The parents don't come to parent-teacher conferences. I've never seen any at open house either. I don't think they really try to help the kids with school. I wonder, maybe in their culture, education isn't important." (Weinstein-Shr and Quintero, 1995)

College Preparation

How many Latino ninth graders and their parents know that to have a range of college choices, by the time they graduate they should have taken several years of science courses such as Biology, chemistry or physics; and math courses that include algebra I, algebra II and geometry? That students' involvement in extracurricular activities has an influence over college admission? Some are not even told about the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test, often used as a factor for College admission)! Several national and community-based organizations help keep students on track toward their educational goals, and more parents need to know that programs like these exist. (See "Resources" at the end of *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action*).

Discipline Procedures: Expulsion and Suspension

Disciplinary actions are disproportionately applied to students of color. In Colorado, for example, Latinos make up 17% of public school students. They are one-third of those expelled from school. (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, November, 1998) Studies in other states find the same disproportionate expulsion rate for Latinos and African-American students. Many are expelled for petty offenses and are denied their right to due process. Very few are given any

alternative form of education, despite the fact that most are legally required to attend school until they are sixteen. Alternatives to expulsion, such as mentoring programs, are seldom offered.

Grade Retention

Latino students are held back more often than White students. Approximately 44% of 13 year-old Latino students are *at least* one year behind. (Nicolau and Ramos, 1998) And being held back a grade is a significant factor in a student's dropping out of school. A child who repeats one grade has a 30% to 50% higher chance of dropping out than if s/he were not held back. If s/he repeats more than one grade, that chance increases dramatically.

Being held back has been shown to have a huge impact on children's level of self-confidence, which affects their ability to learn. Even very young children feel stigmatized by being held back. Research shows that students learn better when they are promoted to the next grade, but offered extra help. The problem, as educator Linda Darling-Hammond puts it, is that grade retention assumes that "the problem, if there is one, resides in the child rather than in the schooling he or she has encountered. Instead of looking carefully at the classroom or school, schools typically send students back to repeat the same experience. Little is done to ensure that the experience will be either more appropriate for the individual child or of higher quality." (1998)

Multicultural Curriculum

Do public school classrooms affirm diverse Latino cultures? In everyday teaching, do they use examples inclusive of Latinos? Very often, the answer is "No." Yet, as Herb Kohl (1994) puts it, "To agree to learn from a stranger who does not respect your integrity causes a major loss of self. The only alternative is to not learn and reject the stranger's world."

Educator Enid Lee (1994) suggests stages schools need to move through to achieve a multicultural curriculum. In the first, a few changes are made in the expressions of culture in the school. Welcome signs are posted in several languages, for example, and a variety of festivals are celebrated. In the next stage, teachers might develop a unit on Caribbean history, but it's separate from the "main menu." Elements of that unit are integrated into existing units in the third stage, and as Lee says, "Ultimately what is at the center of the curriculum gets changed from its (place of) prominence." In this stage, she says further, "We also begin to ask different questions about why and what we are doing. Whose interest is it in that we study what we study? Why is it that certain kinds of knowledge get hidden? In mathematics, instead of studying statistics with sports and weather numbers, why not look at unemployment in light of ethnicity?" The final stage in Lee's scheme is the social change stage, where the children help to affect change outside the school.

The Need for Latino Teachers, Counselors, Administrators and Support Staff

Latino staff tend to believe more in Latino students, often pushing them farther than other teachers would; and they tend to be able to reach out more effectively to Latino parents and the community. Yet less than three percent of the teachers in the U.S. are Latino. That means there are 64 Latino students for every Latino teacher. Latino administrators are also three percent of the total, and Latino/a guidance counselors are equally few in number. (NCLR, 1997)

School Budgets

Because almost half of all school funding comes from local property taxes, middle-class suburban schools have vastly more funding than urban schools, where students are often 90-100% children of color. (Piana, 1999) The federal government provides extra funding for bilingual education and Title I programs*, but schools have to document the need for it, and many don't do a thorough job.

In general, less money means fewer supplies, including books; larger classes; and classrooms and buildings that are falling apart. Proposed reforms include changing a system where the property tax is the major source of local educational funds, and increasing the share paid by the federal government, which now provides only six percent of total school funding. (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1994). A related issue is the role of education in federal funding priorities. In 1995, for example, the federal government spent four billion dollars more on corrections than it did on education. (Sides, 1997)

Testing

In addition to most standardized tests' cultural bias, the tests penalize imaginative and critical thinking, and don't reflect how children really learn. While people who want to see progressive change in public school agree that it's time for higher standards to be put into place for *all* children, standardized tests are not the answer. In fact, they often get in the way of implementing strategies that would lead to higher standards being met!

According to the National Coalition of Education Activists (NCEA), "Studies . . . have shown that school improvement is rooted in effective leadership, high expectations for all students, cohesive staff with a clearly articulated vision and knowledge of 'best' practices, and strong ties to parents and communities. An over-emphasis on test scores tends to take attention away from these kinds of changes and place it on preparing students for a test." And as NCEA further points out, "Poor kids and children of color are likely, once again, to get the short end of the stick. Research . . . shows that well-to-do, high-achieving schools are less likely than poor schools to let tests control curriculum and instruction. Rather, high-achieving schools tend to emphasize changes of the sort described above." (1999)

* Title I, a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Education, provides essential educational services for "disadvantaged" students in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Victory Stories

De-Tracking in Alabama

Since 1990, CARE (Coalition of Alabamians Reforming Education) has been working to get rid of tracking in the Alabama public schools. In Selma, although 80 percent of the students were African-American, they represented only 20 percent of the kids in the upper track. According to the magazine *Colorlines*, "teachers and counselors were keeping African-American students from taking algebra under any circumstances." CARE had to persuade the Selma superintendent of schools to *let* African-American students take algebra. Today, the organization is working with two poorly-performing schools in Alabama to de-track completely. And out of CARE has grown SMART, Student Movement Against Racial Tracking. CARE also has a weekly radio show, School Talk, which reports on what's going on in the State Board of Education.

Information from A. Monifa and J. Parr's "Education is a right!: The state of organizing" in *Colorlines*. See "References" at the end of ***Part 3: Changing Our Schools***.

La Escuela Inter-Americana

La Escuela Inter-Americana is a two-way bilingual public school in Chicago for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, drawing on resources from all the Americas—Central, North and South. It is the first bilingual school started by parents in the U.S., and parents are involved in every aspect of the school, including curriculum development.

About one-half of the students speak only English when they enter pre-kindergarten, and the other half are bilingual or Spanish dominant. The school is committed to the development and maintenance of fluency and literacy in Spanish and English. As opposed to other "bilingual" settings where English is often still the official language, at *La Escuela Inter-Americana*, it is Spanish. Telephones are answered first in Spanish, and then switched to English if necessary, and daily announcements posted in the office are mostly in Spanish. One eighth grade student who has been at the school since pre-kindergarten came to the U.S. from Mexico. She reports that "the greatest part about the program is that not only has she become fully bilingual, biliterate and able to speak English without an accent, but . . . when she went to visit her cousins in Mexico City, she could also speak Spanish—without a U.S. accent."

Information from National Coalition of Advocates for Students' *Delivering on the promise: Positive practices for immigrant students*. See "References" at the end of ***Part 3: Changing Our Schools***.

Handout

Handout

Chinatown Parents Unite

As the *Philadelphia Public School Notebook* reports, "Before the Chinatown Parents Association began in 1994, McCall Elementary School had only one Asian bilingual teacher, who did not even speak the dialect of the primary parent group. Its one bilingual counseling assistant did not communicate often with parents and only occasionally sent home notes in Chinese. Students complained about (ESL) teachers who played games during class time and didn't give out homework." Sui Ling Chen, a parent at McCall, tried to attend the Home and School Association to find out more, but the others spoke so fast in English, she couldn't get in her questions.

Chen went to a meeting in Chinese held by a community organization called Asian Americans United (AAU), whose members were fighting for bus service for Chinatown's elementary school students. Without it, young children were walking almost a mile through downtown streets to get to school. Chen joined the effort and with other parents formed the Chinatown Parents Association (CPA). They work on Chinatown school issues, but also, in coalition with other Asian Americans through AAU, have addressed issues such as welfare reform. One of CPA's achievements in the three years since it formed is bringing an Asian bilingual program to McCall. Their current goal is an Asian bilingual school.

Information from *Philadelphia Public School Notebook*. See "References" at the end of ***Part 3: Changing Our Schools***

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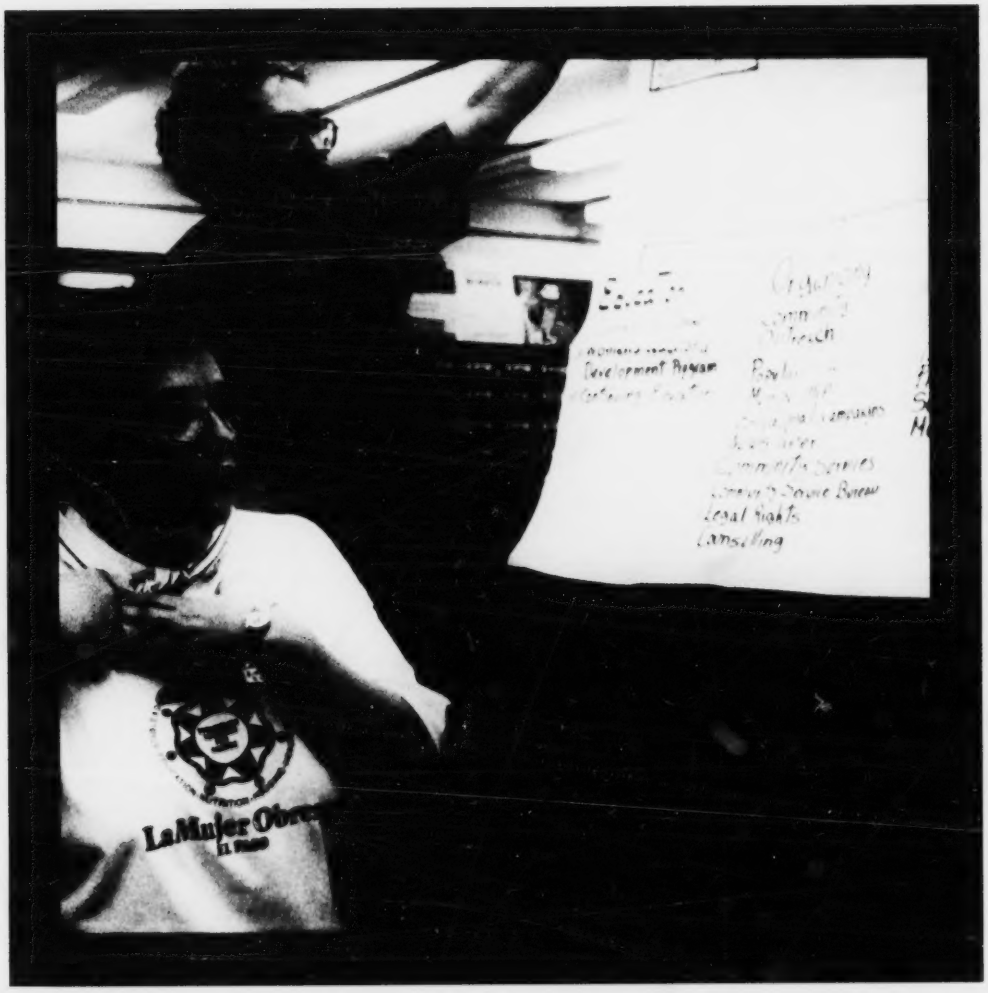
Our Working Lives



Hilary Markus/Impact Visuals

Representative of La Mujer Obrera, a community-based organization of garment workers in El Paso, Texas presents her organizational chart at a conference. Community and labor activists from around the country came to discuss The Workers Center model of organization, which La Mujer Obrera has helped to create.

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Introduction to Our Working Lives

ESL educator Andy Nash points out that the traditional approach to work-related curriculum "focuses on workers without similar attention to workplaces" (1998). She's right; there are excellent resources aimed at preparing immigrants for jobs in the U.S.*, and many of these are listed under "Resources." But what about the times when individual change, whether through increased job readiness skills or further education, is not the answer to a better work life?

Andy describes an activity she used with a group of adult education teachers to begin to address this question.

> Adapting an activity from Simon, Dippo and Schenke (*Learning Work*), I asked each person to think of a job they'd had, and to list what they would have needed in order to become more productive in that job. I then asked them to sort the list into the items that related to their own changes and skill development ("more training," "a better attitude," "reading my training materials," etc.) and items that described other kinds of changes ("more information from the company," "more feedback on my work," "end of capitalism," "a more comfortable work space," etc.) When we came back to share and discuss the lists, we found that individual changes accounted for only 25-30 percent of those needed. We used our observations as a way to begin talking about our own roles in emphasizing education as the primary means to an improved work life, when our own experiences were telling us something else." (Nash 1998)

This section of *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action* is divided into two parts, "Where Are We Now?" and "Where Are We Going?" It doesn't ignore the role education plays in employment, but its focus is on the "something else."

To counteract false ideas about immigrant labor perpetuated in the media, and help generate feelings of pride, ***Part 1: Where Are We Now?*** begins with recognition of the contribution immigrant labor makes to the U.S. economy. Then, as in ***Educating Our Children***, students have a chance to tell their own stories. This time the stories are about work, and they are expanded to also consider the stories of their parents' and grandparents' work lives, as well as the work options available to their children. From there, we turn to the statistics which reveal what Latinos are up against as they enter or try to improve their place in the job market. This is followed by a look at sexual harassment on the job. (While information presented in Part 1 on the results of racism and sexism can be overwhelming, a sense of possibility is offered in ***Part 2: Where Do We***

Go From Here?) Then we go to the movies. From among the suggested list of films, you can choose any that match the concerns that have emerged in your discussions so far. Also provided are activities that turn a popular movie into a valuable classroom tool.

We tend to think that workplaces are just naturally organized a certain way. In a day care center, for example, one person cleans, another answers the phones, another supervises all the teachers. But in truth, there are many possible ways for a workplace to be arranged. ***Part 2: Where Do We Go From Here?*** starts with a vision of a work site where the workers are in charge, and many of the jobs are shared. This section opens up for students the possibility that their work lives could be very different. From there, based on the ideas generated in class so far, students are asked to consider good jobs versus bad ones, and begin to identify the kind of job they want. Along the way, women are especially encouraged to consider nontraditional jobs, and each student is encouraged to dream. Ideas for finding out more about potential careers and jobs follow. There is also a discussion of the roles unions have played in redefining work conditions. As with each section of *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action*, this one ends with the stories of worker victories.

* Job discrimination faced by immigrants has been the focus of entire curricula. See especially *A Curriculum Packet on Immigration-Related Job Discrimination* by A. Nash and P. Wright, listed under "Resources" at the end of *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action*.

Our Working Lives

Part 1: Where Are We Now?

Lesson One

Immigrant Workers and the Economy

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Use mathematics in problem-solving and communications
Reflect and evaluate

Objectives
To provide information that counters the negative stereotypes about immigrants and work.

To generate or enhance feelings of pride in immigrant labor's contributions to this country's economy.

Materials
For each participant: The handout "It's a Myth"

Suggested Process
You may want to introduce this short activity by asking if students have heard the idea that immigrants take jobs away from U.S.-born workers. Where have they heard it? What do they think? How about the idea that immigrants don't pay their share of taxes?

After some discussion, hand out "It's a Myth" to each student. Have them work in small groups to fill in the blanks.

Facilitate discussion based on their answers, and share those from the answer key. Find out what surprised you and your students most, and why.

It's a Myth

Myth #1: Immigrants take jobs away from U.S.-born workers

1. As a group, immigrants add <u>more / fewer</u> jobs to the country than do those born here. (Circle one)

2. Between 1970 and 1980, _____ new jobs were created in Los Angeles by immigrants.

   Choose one: 0 5,000 78,000

3. In New York State, immigrants own _____ businesses.

   Choose one: 4,000 10,000 40,000

Myth #2: Immigrants don't pay their fair share of taxes.

4. As a group, immigrants pay $____ more per year in taxes than they use in health care, education and social services.

   Choose one: one billion two billion $25-30 billion

5. Each immigrant, over her lifetime, pays $____ more in taxes than she receives in government benefits.

   Choose one: $1,000 $5,000 $15-20,000

6. In cities and neighborhoods where large numbers of immigrants live, spending by immigrant consumers makes up a <u>small / large</u> portion of the economy of that region. (Circle one)

Handout

Answers to It's a Myth

1. Immigrants add twice as many jobs to the country as a whole than do those born here, through the creation of new businesses, spending, and by raising the productivity of U.S. companies.

2. 78,000. These jobs were created by immigrants who work, and those who spend money in businesses that are largely supported by immigrant communities.

3. 40,000. These businesses create tens of thousands of jobs and boost the economy by $3.5 billion.

4. $25-30 billion.

5. $15-20,000.

6. Large.

More information to share

According to several studies, the availability of an immigrant labor force willing to work for low wages has kept the furniture, garment and shoe industries in Southern California, and textile industries in Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco from leaving the U.S., which means that many other jobs, filled by non-immigrants, were saved.

Information from *Other colors: Stories of women immigrants teaching kit* by R. Martin and T. Schreiber. See "References" at the end of ***Our Working Lives***

Lesson Two

Our Working Lives

EFF Generative Skills
Convey ideas in writing
Reflect and evaluate

Objective
To encourage students' reflection on their work lives so far—and that of family members—to ground their later thinking about the work they would like to do.

Suggested Process
Depending on the number of people you have, you may need more than one class period to complete this lesson. If need be, you might skip the "key phrases" activity and go right to the grid. But if time allows, doing both activities will lead to much deeper reflection, and thus will have a deeper impact on the lessons to follow.

Use the "key phrases" activity in Lesson Two of ***Part 1: Maintaining Family History and Culture*** in ***Educating Our Children.*** This time, ask each participant to think about what his grandparents did for a living. (You can let everyone know that if they're not sure, they can think about their parents' jobs, or even their aunts' and uncles'.) Follow the activity as before, from the initial discussion through writing to revisions.

Facilitate a discussion based on the similarities and differences in their grandparents' work lives. What common patterns emerged? What are the reasons for significant differences?

Next, have students fill in the grid below.

Our Family's Work

Grandmother: _____ Grandfather: _____

Mother: _____ Father: _____

Own: _____

Daughter's*: _____ Son's*: _____

*If they have children, but they are not yet working, have students fill in what they think their children's work options will be.

Ask students to write about what they learned as they looked at the history of their families' work through their initial writing in this activity and their grids.

Have as many people as possible share what they learned.

Lesson Three

What Do Statistics Tell Us?

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Use mathematics in problem-solving and communications

Objectives
To provide some students a broader context in which to place their own experiences of sexism and racism when it comes to employment and employment options.

To offer other students an opportunity to reflect on the role racism and sexism plays in employment.

To give all students a chance to consider their responses to the information on median weekly earnings of different groups.

Materials
For each participant: a copy of the graph "Median Weekly Earning of Full-Time Workers in 1993"

Suggested Process
Have everyone in class examine the graph in small groups. Let group members know the first question to answer among themselves is simply, "What do you notice when you look at this graph?" Give them some time to respond. Then ask: "What conclusions do you make from this information?" followed by, "Are there any surprises?" Finally, ask the groups to jot down any questions they have.

Facilitate a large group discussion. Be sure to address the questions raised, and jot down any that can't be answered by the large group.

One of the conclusions people may draw is that Latino workers, or African-Americans, or women have less education than White men. If so, provide the following information: On average, White men without a high school degree earn more than Latino and African-American men with some college. On average, White men also earn more than all women, regardless of the latter's level of education.

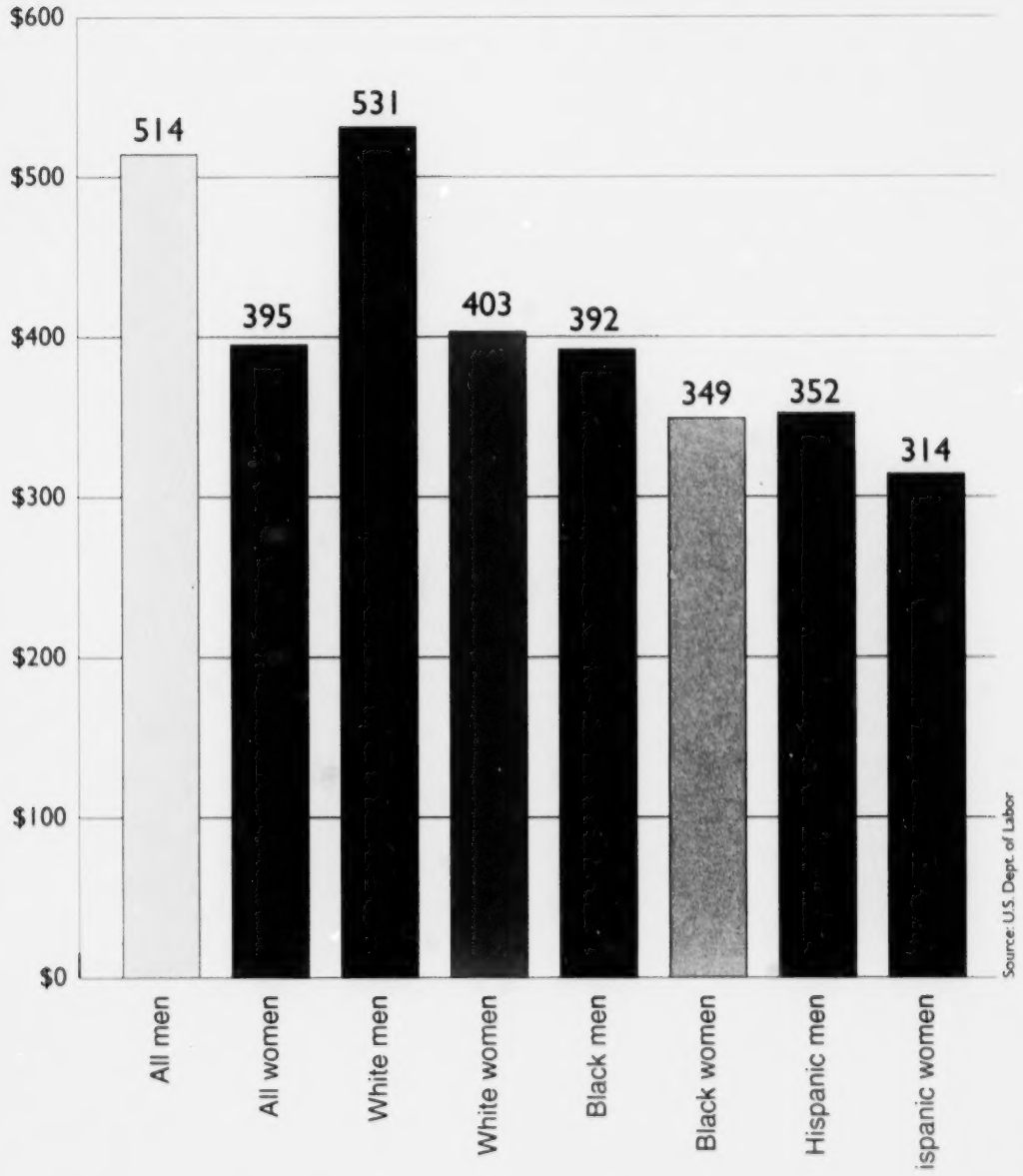
Give people a chance to react to this information before providing more, specifically regarding immigrants: Of all immigrants to the U.S., Africans have the highest level of education. But their median household income is $17,871. Compare this to the median household income of English immigrants: $41,158.*

So what does all this mean for the people in class? You might facilitate a discussion on the possibly contradictory responses they may have—on the one hand, striving for further education; on the other hand, knowing that by itself, education's promise may not deliver.

Before ending this lesson, come back to the questions left unanswered, and ask the group how they would like to address them.

*Information from Applied Research Center

Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Workers in 1993



Handout

Lesson Four

Saying "No" to Sexual Harassment

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Solve problems and make decisions
Reflect and evaluate

Objectives
To offer time and space to reflect on concerns that students, especially women, may face in the workplace.

To provide students with information they may need regarding sexual harassment, and strategies to counter it.

Materials
For each small group: large-sized Post-it™ notes with one of the statements below, and flip chart paper

For each individual: a copy of the handout "What You Can Do about Sexual Harassment"

Notes on this lesson
You may want to have on hand the contact information for women's, immigrant, or other support groups in case students would like to follow up with one of these.

Suggested Process
Begin by referring to the information on women's earnings from Lesson Three. Because of low pay and the fact that many women are the sole source of support for their families, women often can't afford to quit a job they don't like, even if it is oppressive. That puts women in the position

of feeling like they have to put up with sexual harassment, or working with hazardous materials. Women immigrants may feel especially vulnerable, due to their legal status, lack of familiarity with labor laws, or cultural and language issues.

This activity uses a variation of the exercise "Agree/Disagree/Not Sure," from Lesson One in ***Educating Our Children, Part 2: Advocating for School Success***.

Divide the class into small groups, with a mix of women and men in each, if possible. Write the following definition on the board: "Sexual harassment is any repeated, unwanted sexual advance."

Give each group a sheet of flipchart paper with columns for "Agree," "Disagree," and "Not Sure." Also provide each group with large-sized Post-it™ notes, with each of the statements below written on one Post-it™ note.

For each statement, ask group members to come up with a collective decision and position the Post-its™ in the corresponding column.

When the groups have completed this activity, ask everyone to come back to the large group. Then, facilitate a discussion on each statement.

Find out if there are other concerns about sexual harassment that the class, or some of its members, would like to learn more about. As a group, come up with a list of resources they could turn to for more information on these topics.

Hand out "What You Can Do about Sexual Harassment", allowing time for discussion and questions.

Statements:

1. It is sexual harassment if your boss continues to put his arm around your shoulders, even after you asked him to stop. *True.*
2. A look can be a form of sexual harassment. *True.*
3. It is sexual harassment if a co-worker asks you out on a date, you say "no" once or twice, and s/he gives up. *False.*
4. It is not sexual harassment if the boss often tells sexual jokes. *False.*
5. Sexually offensive cartoons posted by the time clock, in the lunchroom, or anywhere else are a form of sexual harassment. *True.*
6. Women are often afraid to talk about sexual harassment because they might be embarrassed, humiliated, or laughed at. *True.*
7. Sexual harassment is against the law only if it causes a worker to be denied a raise or a promotion. *False. It is also against the law if it interferes with workers' ability to do their job, or just makes the workplace uncomfortable.*

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What You Can Do about Sexual Harassment.

- Tell the person very directly that you want this behavior to stop.
- Tell someone higher up that this is happening. This could include your boss, another supervisor, or the Human Resources Department at your workplace.
- Write down everything that happens. Include the date, time, anyone who saw what happened, and who you reported it to.
- You can report sexual harassment to the federal agency called the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).
- What if you are afraid to do these things? Get advice and support from your union.
- What if you don't have a union? Contact a women's, immigrant, or other support organization.

Here is one woman's story:

"I was very upset when my supervisor asked me for sex. I quit my job. I just didn't know what to do. I talked with a lawyer at a community agency about my problem. She told me I could get unemployment benefits because I was the victim of sexual harassment, and I could also file a charge against my company. I got money for the time I missed work and my old job back with a new supervisor."

From *Immigrant Rights: An ESOL workbook* by A. Becker. See "References" at the end of ***Our Working Lives***.

Lesson Five

Don't Forget the Popcorn

EFF Generative Skills
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Observe critically
Reflect and evaluate

Objective
Depending on the film you choose, this lesson can be used to further any number of objectives you and/or the group feels need addressing at this moment in your work together. It may help give a different perspective on an issue, or simply spark further dialogue.

Materials
VCR and movie

Suggested Process
Choose any work-related movie. An excellent guide to popular films about working people and labor activism is *Working stiffs, union maids, and riff-raff* (see "Resources"). Or you may want to just visit your local video store and take a look at those suggested by ESL educator Lenore Balliro below*:

Movies with Work Themes

Blue Collar
Clerks
Eat Drink Man Woman
El Norte
Grapes of Wrath
Gung Ho
Harlan County USA
I Love Lucy: Job Switching Episode
Jerry McGuire
Living on Tokyo Time
Metal and Melancholy
Modern Times
Mr. Mom
Nine to Five
Norma Rae
Roger and Me
Salt of the Earth
Silkwood
Swing Shift
The Full Monty
Wall Street
Working Girl

* From "Let's go to the movies: Using Norma Rae in the classroom" in the September 1998 edition of *The Change Agent*. See "References" at the end of ***Our Working Lives***

While viewing the film, the following activities provide people with an opportunity to react to what they've heard so far, predict what will happen next, and reflect on the meaning they found. Inevitably, they make for active viewing of the film.

Interrupting the Tape:

- Find spots where stopping the film and asking students to reflect on what they've seen so far will increase their engagement with what's to come. You can ask them to respond verbally, or quickly write what they're thinking at that moment.
- Stop the tape and ask people to form a pair with someone nearby. Give everyone five minutes each to just talk about what they've seen so far. The listener's job is to simply encourage the speaker to keep talking, without interrupting him or her.
- Have students role play a situation between characters. Then continue watching the film to see if what the characters do match your predictions of how they would act.
- Use a question like the following to generate discussion: "What does the movie remind you of so far in yourself, or your experiences?"

After the Film:

Write your own summary of the movie and ask students to do the same. We re-create the movie as we watch it. Our summaries are actually our interpretations. Compare these among the group. This exercise demonstrates that even something as simple as summarizing the story you have seen becomes a creative act. In the words of philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, you automatically "enter into dialogue with it" as you retell it. The process gives us the opportunity to compare our understandings of the movie and examine the histories, knowledge, and values that shape them.

Our Working Lives

Part 2: Where Do We Go From Here?

Lesson One

Look Who's in Charge!

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Reflect and evaluate

Objectives
To demonstrate there are many ways for a workplace to be arranged.

To offer students a chance to reflect on the changes they would make in their own work sites.

Note: This lesson is made up of two activities. The second requires the use of cameras. If these are not available to you, Activity 1 can stand alone.

Activity 1

Materials
For each participant: a copy of the handout "Look Who's in Charge!", and "The Way Day Care Should Be"

Suggested Process
Put the first paragraph of the handout "Look Who's in Charge!" on the board:

> What if you decided how much money you would make? What if you made your own schedule? What if you made just about every other decision there is to make at your workplace?

Tell students this is the first paragraph of something they are about to read. Ask them to guess what the reading will be about. Allow enough time to generate several ideas.

Then ask students to call out the questions they hope the rest of the reading will answer. List these on the board.

Ask everyone to read "Look Who's in Charge!", seeing if their predictions were correct, and jotting down any answers they find to their questions. Ask them to jot down their reactions to the reading when they are done.

After discussing "Look Who's in Charge!" let students know you have another example of a worker-owned business, and hand out "The Way Day Care Should Be". Allow time for reading and discussion.

If you are not able to use Activity 2 because cameras are not available, have students work in small groups to answer the question, "What changes would you make in your workplace if you and your co-workers were in charge?" Have one person record the answers, and use these as a catalyst for a large group discussion.

Activity 2

Materials

Cameras for each student in class who is able to and would like to take pictures at his/her work site.

A budget for film development, unless Polaroid™ cameras are used.

Suggested Process

Provide a camera for each student who is able to and would like to take pictures at his/her work site. Suggest they look for images that help them describe what would change if they were in charge of their workplace. Have them bring these to class as a catalyst for discussion. Some examples might include the following:

- Physical changes such as moving or rearranging equipment
- Scheduling changes
- Changes in rules or policies

Look Who's in Charge!

What if *you* decided how much money you would make? What if you made your own schedule? What if you made just about every other decision there is to make at your workplace?

If you made these decisions along with your co-workers, you'd be a member of a cooperative, also called a "worker-owned" business. A cooperative workplace is one where everyone is the boss, and everyone is the owner. You may not have heard of this before, but there are lots of examples.

Collective Copies in Massachusetts is one. Workers at a chain copy store picketed against unfair working conditions. But instead of things getting better, the store closed. The workers then decided they could do a better job of running the place. They put their money together, bought the equipment, and went into business. There are eight workers. Each has a different job, but no one is the boss. They make all decisions together.

Other cooperatives work differently. Instead of each person having a different job to do, all the jobs are shared. So everyone takes a turn answering the phone, talking to customers, doing paperwork, and cleaning the bathrooms. Even some very large companies are cooperatives. A worker-owned cab company in Wisconsin has 240 employees.

What would happen if *your* workplace were worker-owned?

Information from "Only bosses need apply" by J. Noll in the September 1998 edition of *The Change Agent*. See "References" at the end of ***Our Working Lives***

The Way Day Care Should Be

On average, a parking lot attendant makes more than a day care worker. Seventy percent of day care workers earn an income that pays them poverty wages. And it's not just bad pay. Only 21% of day care centers provide health insurance. Few offer paid vacation or sick days.

But in Philadelphia, some day care workers earn more than others. These same workers receive health benefits (even if they work part-time), two to three weeks paid vacation, sick days, personal days, time off for training, and day care benefits for their own children. They work for Childspace, a day care cooperative where the workers run the show. Whether s/he is the director of the center or an assistant teacher, each worker has an equal vote when decisions are made regarding things like raises and benefits. And the Childspace staff does all this while providing quality day care to a mix of middle- and low-income families.

Not only is the quality of day care Childspace provides very good, but worker satisfaction at Childspace is high. Nationally, more than one in three day care workers leave their job every year. At Childspace, *less* than one in five leave. That means teachers have time to really learn about the children and develop strong relationships with them, and with their co-workers.

There's a slogan used by those who advocate for improved day care: "Parents Can't Afford to Pay/Teachers Can't Afford to Stay/There's Got to Be a Better Way." Childspace shows us there is one.

Information from "Story time in Philadelphia" by J. Walljaspar. See "References" at the end of ***Our Working Lives***

Lesson Two

What's a Good Job?*

EFF Generative Skills
Reflect and evaluate

Objective
To begin to develop criteria for evaluating jobs and careers.

Suggested Process
Each person creates three columns on a piece of paper. On the left, ask everyone to list all the jobs they consider "bad," and on the right the jobs they think are "good." For now, the third column is left blank.

When they are finished, list all the jobs in both columns of students' charts on the board as students call them out. List the same job again, even if it has been called out before.

Facilitate a discussion based on questions such as the following: "Which jobs were mentioned more than once?" "Are there any jobs listed in both columns?" "Does anyone think a 'good' job is really 'bad,' or the other way around?"

Now ask everyone to return to their own papers, and add to their "good job" column any jobs they now wish to add.

Working in pairs or small groups, have students list in their third column the qualities shared by the jobs in the "good job" column. You might ask something like, "What do they have in common?" or "What makes a good job?"

* Adapted from *Working hands and critical minds: A Paulo Freire model for job-training* by I. Shor. See "References" at the end of ***Our Working Lives***.

Lesson Three

Identifying the Job You Want

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Convey ideas in writing
Reflect and evaluate
Take responsibility for learning

Objective
To broaden students' visions of the kinds of work they might pursue.

Materials
For each participant: a copy of the handout "Hair Net or Hard Hat?"

Suggested Process
Ask students to review the grids they created in Lesson Two of ***Part 1: Where Are We Now?***

Write the following questions on the board:*

> What did you dream of becoming as a child?
> What dreams do you still have?
> What things in your life pushed you in certain directions and not others?

Have each student take a sheet of paper and create three columns, filling in their thoughts under "Childhood Dreams," "Current Dreams," and "The Things that Pushed Me."

Facilitate discussion on each of the questions. Have students circle any of their current dreams that fit under the category of a good job.

The things that pushed people in one direction or another may include, among others, the need to support children, lack of education, lack of economic opportunities in their home country or in the U.S., and limited expectations of what women can do. Or they may include things like wanting the training or the benefits that the job offered, enjoying the work, or having a chance to work with people they liked.

Write the following two columns on the board:

Telephone Repair Person	Clerical Worker
Plumber	Nurse's Aid
Construction Worker	Food Worker
Electrician	Housekeeping

Ask students which jobs earn more money? Which are done mostly by men? by women? Why?

Next, have students read the handout "Hair Net or Hard Hat?" After they do, allow time for reactions. Ask if there are jobs anyone in the room, man or woman, thought they couldn't do that they might consider and add to "Current Dreams." Then have them circle any of these that fit the criteria of a good job.

Now ask everyone to choose one job on their "good job" list that they would like to learn more about.

* These questions come from *Claiming what is ours. An economic experience workbook* by W. Luttrell. See "References" at the end of ***Our Working Lives***.

Hair Net or Hard Hat?

One single mother of two earns at least $20 an hour. Another single mother of four makes as much as $65,000 a year, with overtime. What do they do for a living?

The mother of two is a construction worker. She has helped to-build highways, airports, and city buildings. Before, she worked in fast food restaurants and as a domestic worker. In addition to the money she makes now, what she likes best is, "I can show my kids something I worked on." The mother of four lifts 35 pound ladders'to climb telephone poles, repairing lines. Almost 90% of her co-workers are men.

In Philadelphia, Girl Renovators in Training trains young women ages 16-19 in entry-level skills in construction and renovation of buildings. These women earn money while they learn carpentry, dry wall, painting, and weatherization techniques. They work side-by-side with a female instructor, and get to meet women who are successful in "nontraditional" jobs.

Wider Opportunities for Women in Washington, DC, helps adult women get into "nontraditional" work. As the director says, "Women earn more in nontraditional work, and if their jobs are unionized, they may have a better benefits package." Another woman who works with Chicago Women in Trades adds, "Women who work with their hands have skills that no one can take away from them. Whether they stay in the trades or not, they gain a sense of competence by learning to work with their hands. They can fix their homes, set up shelves, and do some of the things they used to wait for someone else to do."

Information from "Hard-hatted women" by J. Malveaux and from a pamphlet by Girl Renovators in Training. See "References" at the end of ***Our Working Lives***

Lesson Four

Investigating the Job You Want, Part I

EFF Generative Skills
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Cooperate with others
Plan
Reflect and evaluate
Take responsibility for learning

Objective
To structure an inquiry into the jobs students are interested in pursuing.

Materials
Large Post-it™ notes

Suggested Process
List the jobs identified at the end of Lesson Three on the board.

Tell the group you want everyone together to come up with 50 questions about these jobs.* At first people may moan that that's too many to expect, but once they get going, the ideas will come fast and furious. Sometimes superficial at first, the questions soon become more significant. That's why it's important for you to ask for 50. It's often the later questions that are deepest. List them on the board as they're called out.

Have everyone look at the list to see if any are really the same questions phrased differently. If so, eliminate any repeats.

While the group takes a break, jot each question in large letters on a large-sized Post-it™ note. (Get a few people to help you, if you can.)

Now ask the group to place the questions into categories on the board. Using Post-it™ notes allows the questions to be moved around more easily in this process. Once they are done, have the group come up with a heading for each category. For example, these might include "Wages and Benefits," "Advancement," or "Atmosphere for Women."

Recopy the categories and questions and photocopy for the next class.

* The idea of asking for 50 questions comes from *More than a job: A curriculum on work and society* by J. Gordon. See "References" at the end of ***Our Working Lives***.

Lesson Five

Investigating the Job You Want, Part II

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Convey ideas in writing
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Plan
Learn through research
Reflect and evaluate
Take responsibility for learning

Objective
To prepare students to carry out their inquiries into jobs and careers that interest them.

Materials
For each participant: a copy of the handout "Some Interview Guidelines"

Note on This Lesson
"Investigating the Job You Want, Part II" is to be implemented on two separate days, as you will see below.

Suggested Process
Help each student to identify someone they could interview to learn more about the job s/he's interested in. Ideally, this will be someone who actually does or has done the work. When that is not possible, it may be someone who runs a community college program or other training project that prepares people for this field.

Have everyone take the group list of categories and questions and select the ones they most want answered.

To expand their individual lists, have everyone write a description of the job they are interested in. As they do, they may realize there is more they want to know, and they can add questions.

Have them decide which of their questions would get a "yes" or "no" answer. Ask, "How could the question be changed to get more information?"

Next, invite one of the people identified to come to class as a speaker. This gives everyone a chance to see an interview in process, and prepares them for their own.

Identify one or two students who will be the designated interviewers. Let everyone know the interviewers will begin with their set of questions, and then open up the floor for more questions and comments.

Before the speaker arrives, have everyone review the handout "Some Interview Guidelines."

After the speaker leaves, ask students to write something of importance they want to remember about what the speaker said.

Some Interview Guidelines

- It helps to ask about specific examples or stories as a follow-up to a general answer. If the person being interviewed says, "I really liked it when I first got there," follow up by saying, "Can you give an example of something you really liked?" Try asking "What was most surprising about . . . ?"
- Begin with your own list of questions during the interview, but remember to listen to what your interviewee is saying, and ask related questions. Don't be afraid to let go of your prepared questions if what is being said is more interesting than what you planned to ask.
- You will make the person being interviewed feel more comfortable if you start by saying, "I have a lot of questions I want to ask, but if there are other things you want to talk about, please feel free to go ahead and say what *you* think is important."
- On the other hand, this is your chance to indulge your curiosity! Think about what you really want to know but never had a chance to ask anyone before. Then do it!

*From *Other colors: Stories of women immigrants teaching kit* by R. Martin and T. Schreiber. See "References" at the end of ***Our Working Lives***.

Lesson Six

Who Needs a Union?

EFF Generative Skills
Read with understanding
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Reflect and evaluate

Objectives
To introduce students to what a union can offer, and immigrant workers' organizing victories.

To allow students with union experience to share their stories.

Materials
For each participant: a copy of the handouts "Immigrant Labor Organizes" and "A Mini-Quiz on Unions and Workers"

Suggested Process
To begin discussion, write, "Union Job" on the board, and ask "Are union jobs good or bad?"* Ask students to explain their answers.

To further discussion, ask each student to get a picture in his or her head of a union member. What does s/he see? How many saw a white man in a hard hat? How many saw a Puerto Rican housekeeper at a hotel? Ask students to read *Immigrant Labor Organizes* and then facilitate a discussion based on their reactions.

Next, hand out "A Mini-Quiz on Unions" as a follow up to the discussion generated by "Immigrant Labor Organizes." Have students work in pairs or small groups to answer the questions on this worksheet.

Set up a panel of students who work or have worked in union jobs. Ask them to talk about their experiences, and then allow time for other students to ask questions. As with the panel you may have used in the lesson on special education, here, too, find out ahead of time if there are four or five people who have worked in union jobs and would be willing to talk about their experiences and answer questions. When they're ready to begin, you might get things started by asking how the discussion so far relates to their experiences.

*Adapted from *Working hands and critical minds: A Paulo Freire model for job-training* by I. Shor. See "References" at the end of **Our Working Lives**

Immigrant Labor Organizes

Many immigrants today continue the long history of immigrant labor activism that includes Caesar Chávez and the United Farm Workers. Below are just a few examples:

- In 1994, the Justice for Janitors campaign in California resulted in widespread union organizing in Los Angeles among mostly immigrant workers.

- In 1997, 200 hospital laundry workers joined a union in Boston. Half of the workers were from Cape Verde, and they received much support for their union efforts from churches in the community. Another 65 were Puerto Rican and Dominican. Their union contract raised the starting pay of a laundry worker, raised the hourly wage, and gave everyone 100% medical coverage.

- In 1991, Mexican and Salvadoran workers at an auto racing equipment company in Los Angeles voted to join the International Association of Machinists. They created the largest manufacturing election victory in thirty years!

- In San Francisco, the *Asociación de Trabajadores Latinos* (Latino Workers Association) organizes "Know Your Rights" workshops for day laborers. They are also seeking a higher minimum wage.

- *La Mujer Obrera* organizes workers in the garment factories of El Paso, Texas. The garment workers in El Paso are mostly immigrant women. They are afraid of losing their jobs to *maquiladoras* across the border in Mexico. As a result, they work in sweatshops, under poor conditions, and for low pay. *La Mujer Obrera* is organizing these women to fight for their rights, and to keep the factories from relocating.

Handout

A Mini-Quiz on Unions and Workers

1. The head of a major corporation led his company as it lost $114 million in profits from 1993-1995. He left his job in 1995, and the corporation:

   a) Gave him at least $1.5 million.
   b) Laid off 277 workers and gave them nothing, saying there were not enough profits.

2. The heads of corporations in the U.S. generally earn more money than heads of corporations anywhere else in the world. The wages and benefits of U.S. factory workers are:

   a) Second in the world.
   b) Third in the world.
   c) Thirteenth in the world.

3. On average, how does the pay of union jobs compare to the pay of non-union jobs? (Circle one.)

   31% more 11% more the same 31% less

4. Which of the following were won by workers organizing together? (Circle one.)

   a) Unemployment benefits
   b) Minimum wage
   c) Child labor laws
   d) All of the above

5. Employers have the right to cut pay if the employees try to unionize. (Circle one.)

   True False

6. Employers have the right to fire employees who try to unionize. (Circle one.)

   True False

Handout

Handout

Answers to "A Mini-Quiz on Unions"

1. Both!
2. C
3. 31% more
4. D
5. False
6. False

Information from United for a Fair Economy and Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment

Victory Stories

What If There is No Union?

Many immigrants work in jobs where they are isolated from each other. They earn less than minimum wage, and may work in unsafe situations. They pick *chile* crops, work as maids, deliver take-out food, or do day labor. Some are documented; some are not. They can't organize with co-workers for safe working conditions and fair wages. Or can they?

The Latino Workers Center and the Chinese Staff and Workers Association in New York are two of the new "worker centers" that are helping immigrants fight for their rights. The members of the centers are mostly workers who earn below the minimum wage, a group of people that has been ignored by many unions. They use picket lines and media publicity to gain fair and legal working conditions. They also educate each other. As one staff member of the Latino Workers Center says, "Bridging the gap between documented and undocumented workers [is hard] . . . with the media blaming the undocumented workers with lowering the wage...[then] when the documented loses the job, there is conflict." The Latino Workers Center is also working with unions to fight back against the INS sweeps of New York work sites for undocumented workers.

Whether you are a young *Mexicano* behind a pizza counter, or a Dominican mother working in a sweat shop, what do you do when the end of the week comes and you've earned $150. What do you do if the boss didn't pay you at all? By yourself, there's not a lot you can do. There are always more options when you're a part of a group.

Information from "Immigrants fight back: Worker centers lead where others don't" by A. Scher in the September 1998 edition of *The Change Agent*. See "References" at the end of ***Our Working Lives***.

Handout

Winning Against Discrimination

A construction worker in Boston makes between $24 and $36 an hour. But who gets those jobs? It's usually not a person of color, and it's usually not a woman. The Greater Roxbury Workers Association (GRWA) is changing that.

According to a city law, each construction site must have 25% minorities, and 10% women. But the city government does nothing to enforce the law. And construction bosses claim there are no qualified women or people of color to hire.

So GRWA members visit construction sites that are not hiring according to the law and stop work by standing in front of construction equipment. And they often bring qualified construction workers who are women and people of color with them. Says the director of the GRWA, "Rather than lose money, [they] hire the minorities and women we bring to the work stoppages."

The GRWA is buying a building for a program to train new people in construction skills. But having the skills doesn't always mean you will get the job. If you join efforts with other people being discriminated against, you have a better chance.

Information from "One job at a time" by E. Best in the September 1998 edition of *The Change Agent*. See "References" at the end of ***Our Working Lives***.

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Community Action

Volunteers in a community improvement program called Detroit Summer paint a mural on a recreation building at St. Hedwig's Catholic Church in Detroit. The Detroit summer program brings together young people from the community and from across the U.S. for three weeks every summer to work on community improvement projects.

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Introduction to Community Action

Sometimes the issues people want to address in their lives are not about education or work. They may have to do with the need for a neighborhood laundromat, creating a community garden, shutting down a toxic waste site, or ending police harassment. ***Community Action, Part 1: What Is Happening In Our Community***, provides students with a chance to name their own local issues. Lesson One helps people identify the concerns they share, whether their community is a small neighborhood or the city of Chicago. Students celebrate the good things about where they live, as they focus on what needs to change. In Lesson Two, the concept of community is broadened beyond the geographical to include those defined by a common language, culture, history, occupation, religion, interest, or goals. Students are encouraged to consider the various communities to which they belong, and how they would like to leave them for their descendants.

Part 2: Taking Action, focuses on the process of making change. Lesson One encourages all of us to see ourselves as providing leadership for change, and provides grounds to contradict the external and internal voices that tell us we can't. The focus of Lesson Two is getting the work done, whether our goal is to change our schools, workplaces, or any of the communities to which we belong.

The victory stories following the lessons address each of the three themes of *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action*: education, work, and community. The story of the women of the North Quabbin Adult Education Center, described in "Who Can Change the World?" is particularly relevant to this section. These women identified a community issue—the need for public transportation in their town—by engaging in a process similar to that described in Lesson One. To address the need, they took some of the steps outlined in Lesson Four. They now have a ten-passenger van with handicap lift. The members of *Padres Unidos* in East Palo Alto, California did their own research and discovered the school district wasn't meeting its obligation to Limited English Proficient students. While they lost their battle to have the district hire bilingual teachers with the same cultural background as their children, that defeat hasn't prevented them from continuing the research and organizing that has encouraged many parents to become active in an effort to change their schools.

Sometimes the fight seems overwhelming. And in the middle of such a struggle, it's easy to forget that we are not the first to face oppression and stare it down. Knowing that others have been successful in similar efforts can provide the kind of sustenance we need. The women of what has come to be called the "Salt of the Earth" strike (featured in the third victory story) offer us a chance to consider the lives of ordinary people, who become extraordinary when they have to.

Please note that the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy, described in "Vocabulary and Class Readings in *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action*" may be especially helpful with the victory story "Chili Peppers vs. Guns."

Community Action

Part I:
What Is Happening In Our Community?

Lesson One

What's Going On In Our Community?

EFF Generative Skills
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Cooperate with others
Advocate and influence
Reflect and evaluate

Objectives
To celebrate the community to which students belong.*

To identify community concerns, including those about which the group would like to learn more, and on which they may want to take action.

Materials
A long sheet of chart paper and magic markers of a few different colors

Suggested Process
Ask the group to identify a spot most people consider central to their community. It might be geographically central, or it might play a central role in community life. Draw this spot in the middle of the paper, and label it. (In this activity, you may choose to draw the map yourself, or have one or more students do the drawing.)

Now ask people to call out other spots in the community, and add them to the map. If you find them identifying only the places they tend to go, ask them to also think of the places they've seldom or never been to. As you add to the map, leave enough white space around each drawing so that additional words can be added later in the lesson. Be sure to allow enough time for this activity so that the map is fairly complete.

Next, have students identify the places to which they go, and those to which they do not, and the reasons for going or not going to each. Examples of the former might include a community garden where they can be outside and visit with neighbors, a public library that has a bilingual story hour, a laundromat owned by a popular neighborhood resident, or a community center with a low-cost early morning exercise class. Examples of places they don't go may include a health clinic that doesn't respect their beliefs about health care, a food coop where they are unable to use Spanish, or a police sub-station where police are known to harass youth of color. Or, they may include something like a toxic waste dump about which they have suspicions. Circle those places they use in one color, and those they do not in another. Jot the reasons next to each location.

On the board or on chart paper, have the group make a collective list of neighborhood concerns based on the thinking that went into creating the map. To illustrate based on the examples above, these might include the need for a health center which they feel comfortable using; the need for a place to buy healthy, inexpensive food where they are able to use Spanish; or the need to end police harassment. Let everyone know that no concern is too big or too small to list.

Now ask if there are other community concerns that have not yet been identified and which should be added to the list.

Before going on the next step, copy down the list of concerns from the board or chart paper. Some will be erased soon, and you may want to keep the full list for future reference.

Ask everyone to consider the list for a moment, and think about which of the issues they would like the group to learn more about and maybe take some action on.

Now go through the list, and for each item, ask if there is someone who would like to say why s/he would like the class to address it. If you come to an item for which no one wishes to speak, erase it. (A number of items will end up getting erased.) Suggest that as someone speaks to an issue, s/he talk about why it matters to him/her.

Ask everyone to vote for three of the remaining issues on the list by raising his/her hand. Jot down the number of votes next to each item. (Don't forget to vote yourself.) Keep the top three vote-getters, and erase the rest. Now ask everyone to vote for one. You should end up with an issue most people agree they would like to investigate. Where it's a close vote between two, you may want to keep the second issue to address later.

Let students know you that in Lesson ***Part 2: Two of Taking Action*** they will have the opportunity to plan how they could address the concern they identified in this lesson.

* For the purpose of this exercise ask students to think of community as a physical location, such as their neighborhood.

Lesson Two

What is a Community?

EFF Generative Skills
Convey ideas in writing
Reflect and evaluate

Objectives
To broaden students' concept of community to include those defined by language, culture, history, occupation, religion, interests, or common goals.

To have students identify at least one community that is not geographical to which they belong.

To identify concerns of communities that are not geographical, including concerns about which students would like to learn more, and concerns they may want to take action on.

Materials
For each participant: a copy of the handout "What is a Community?"

Suggested Process

Divide the class into pairs or small groups. Have them look at "What is a Community?" and answer the questions it poses.

Facilitate a large group discussion based on the responses to "What is a Community?" Make two lists out of answers to the last two questions on that handout. Use the first question to help create a group definition of "community." When discussing the second question, ask everyone to identify one community to which they belong, to use in the next part of the lesson. Write these on the blackboard. If two or more people have chosen the same community, ask them to work together in the following step.

For the community each student has chosen, ask everyone to think about his or her "descendants" over the next *several* generations, i.e., future women with breast cancer, future immigrants from Cape Verde, and so on. Have each person makes a list of ten things s/he would want to leave members of these future generations when s/he is gone. Let them know, again, that nothing is too big or too small to be included in the list.

Now ask each person to choose the three things they think are most important on his/her list. These can be considered the goal they have for their communities, to be worked with in Part 2 of ***Community Action***, if they wish.

What is a Community?

A community can be any group of people who share a language, a culture, history, occupation, religion, interests, or common concerns and goals.

Which of the following would you call a "community"? Why?

People from Cape Verde

Women on welfare

Students in the same class

People with disabilities

Members of a church

Gay youth

Retired coal miners

Breast cancer survivors

Selena fans

Survivors of domestic violence

Members of a bowling league

Rock climbers

People who work on the same hospital ward

What does "community" mean to you?

What communities are you a part of?

Community Action

Part 2:
Taking Action

Lesson One

Our Collective Strength

EFF Generative Skills
Convey ideas in writing
Reflect and evaluate

Objectives
To encourage students to see themselves and each other as providing leadership for change.

To provide grounds to contradict the external and internal voices that tell us we can't make change.

Suggested Process
In this activity, students will create a web, using a process similar to the one described in Lesson 2 of ***Educating Our Children, Part 3: Changing Our Schools***. This time, they are using it to address the question: "How have you helped to create change in your family, community, or elsewhere?" You might want to frame it as, "When was a time you felt you had the power—by yourself or as a member of a group—to change something that was wrong?"

Have students work in pairs. Ask each one to take a moment to think of a change s/he created or helped to create, and write it in the middle of a piece of paper. If there are people who get stuck, have them talk to their partners and see what ideas come up. Asking for volunteers to share their changes with everyone will also help spark ideas for others.

Now pose the question, "What made it possible for you to make this change?" Have them list all these ideas as threads coming out of the web. Answers may range from "hanging in," to "knowing how the game is played," to "motivation to keep a commitment to my son." Have each person share his/her web with his/her partner as a way to gather more ideas.

Share both the changes and what made them possible in the large group, encouraging the group to celebrate its collective strength.

Lesson Two

Making a Plan for Group Action

EFF Generative Skills
Convey ideas in writing
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Cooperate with others
Advocate and influence
Resolve conflict and negotiate
Plan
Solve problems and make decisions
Use information and communication technology
Learn through research
Reflect and evaluate
Take responsibility for learning

Objective
To put you and your students on the road to taking action on the issues you have identified.

Note
This lesson is extensive. You will want to allow more than one class period to go through it.

Materials
For each student: a copy of the handout "Plan for Action"

Suggested Process
Choose any issue the group has identified in ***Educating Our Children, Our Working Lives***, or in the previous lessons in ***Community Action***, and take it through the steps outlined on the handout "Plan for Action". If not everyone wishes to address the same issue, choose one to go through as a group, as a way to model the planning process. Then small groups may wish to apply it to different concerns.

Plan for Action

1. **The Problem**

   Describe the problem in a sentence or two. (What is it? Why is it a problem?)

   Who is affected by the problem? Describe the community—whether Latino students at a particular elementary school or an entire neighborhood of Boston—as fully as you can. (For example, who are the members of this community by race, gender, and age?)

   Who is legally responsible for solving the problem?

   Is anyone doing anything about the problem now?

2. **Vision**

   What is your vision? What do you want to see? Is it a more comfortable atmosphere for women at your workplace? Improved academic success for the children in your community? A safer community?

3. **Goals**

   What goals will help you achieve your vision? Instituting a Sexual harassment policy? More bilingual teachers at your local school? Do you want a bar next to your children's playground shut down?

4. **Activities**

   How will you bring about the goals you listed in step three above? What activities will you carry out?

   Make a chart with each activity, the person(s) responsible for carrying it out, and a realistic timeline. Copy the chart for everyone.

Activity	Person Responsible	Deadline

Where to Begin

For instance, your first step may be to make a list of questions you have about the issue, and your second step to figure out where to go for answers. As an example, check out the victory story of the women of the North Quabbin Adult Education Center to see the questions they raised about public transportation in their community, and where they turned for information.

As another example, let's say you raised questions and concerns earlier in class about the special education placement rate for Latino children at your local school. Each district has a Director of School Information, a Community Affairs Office, a Public Information Office, or other department set up to provide information to the public. Plan to visit or call. If you're not satisfied with the information you get, a next step might be to go to the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent's office. You might interview school staff, parents, and youth, or survey community members. You might observe a special education placement meeting and record what you see. And don't forget something as simple as documenting the personal experiences of the people in your group.

In addition to your own research, you may want to put pressure on the school district to collect and share statistics on special education placement. (The same could be true if your concern is the Latino drop-out rate in your district, retention rates, or disciplinary actions.)

5. Resources and Allies

What will you need to make this happen? For example, will you need money for photocopying? Someone with access to a machine who can make copies for free?

Who will you need to make this happen? List the individuals and groups who would support you in trying to solve the problem. Make alliances with African-American, Asian and other groups. Read and discuss "Building Cross-Cultural Relationships" below. What are the experiences of class members in working with people from different cultures? What were the obstacles? What helped make it work?

If you are a parents' group, don't forget to make alliances with youth, and with the school staff or school board members you know are on your side, or whom you might be able to persuade.

Will you need contacts in the media? Find out who knows someone in the media.

6. **Evaluation**

   Check your progress often. See if you need to make any changes in your activities.

7. **Celebrate Along the Way!**

   Hold parties, barbeques, or other social events. This is important to keeping everyone going strong.

Building Cross-Cultural Relationships

We should be willing to get to know each other. This process can not be rushed. It is at the heart of establishing trust.

When we don't trust others, we should admit to ourselves that we may be afraid of those who are different from us.

We should expect to make mistakes in cross-cultural relating. It helps to be able to say, "I'm sorry."

It is important to become allies with people from other cultures. We need friends.

Adapted from materials by the Intercultural Community Leadership Project at Santa Fe Community College

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Who Can Change the World?

In the winter of 1997, women at the North Quabbin Adult Education Center in Orange, Massachusetts took a large sheet of paper and listed all the problems in their area. They agreed that transportation was the most important. The only operating transportation service was a single cab service, which was expensive and often not available.

Deciding to take some action, the women listed the questions that would help them get information about public transportation in Orange. These included:

- What kind of public transportation did Orange have in the past?
- Why did it stop?
- Who is responsible?
- What kind of public transportation would work in this area?
- Where will the money come from to support it?
- How do we get support for this from people who have cars?

The women found answers by making calls to people who knew the community well and could provide names of others to call; talking with older people who remembered riding trolleys, buses, and trains; visiting the public library and historical society; and writing letters to elected and public transportation officials.

They thought about how to share what they learned and educate others in their community. Some of their ideas were to: (1) circulate a petition asking for support for public transportation; (2) put up flyers in stores; (3) attend community meetings to talk about the issue; (4) talk to people who would be concerned about public transportation; (5) write to legislators for support; (6) write letters to the editor of the local newspaper; and (7) hold a public meeting.

Finally, the women produced a show for community television. It included a skit in which the only neighbor with a car takes a woman in labor to the hospital. Three other women who also depended on the same neighbor for transportation are left stranded with no way to get to the grocery, bank, and probation office. The skit was followed by a call-in talk show with a panel including two of the students, two Board members from the Center, and the director of the regional transit authority.

Before the year was out, Orange had a ten-passenger van with a handicap lift. To cover insurance and repairs, residents have had raffles and a walk-a-thon, and sold buttons that say, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has!" Many residents are continuing the campaign for a public bus.

Information from *Getting involved in community issues: Yes, you can make a difference* by the women at the North Quabbin Adult Education Center. See "References" at the end of ***Community Action***.

Padres Unidos

In East Palo Alto, California, an estimated 75 percent of youths do not finish high school. In 1990, parents who were concerned over their children's lack of progress in school came together to form *Padres Unidos*. The parents realized they needed to document exactly what was happening in East Palo Alto schools and to learn more about school district policies.

Over 65 percent of the school district's students were not fully fluent in English, and one of the parents' biggest concerns was the lack of certified bilingual teachers. They learned more about the state's obligation to provide equal education for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. The parents decided to push the school district to hire more bilingual teachers. They also decided to put pressure on the district to meet the state requirement that every school which has more than 21 LEP students have a bilingual parent advisory committee.

First, the parents had to do some research. They gathered information from the various sources: interviews with teachers, classroom observations, and meetings with school district personnel. They also documented their own children's experiences in school. They soon realized they needed more allies. They created and performed skits and led workshops for other parents about the rights of LEP students.

In the spring of 1994, the school district decided to hire ten bilingual teachers from Spain. From their research, the parents knew that the most effective teachers come from the same cultural backgrounds as the students. They wrote a letter to the district, recommending teachers be recruited from California, Mexico, or Central America. Following that, they set up a meeting with district personnel attended by many parents.

The parents' proposal was rejected, and the teachers from Spain were hired. But one defeat has not stopped *Padres Unidos*. Their higher goal is to continue the research and organizing that has encouraged so many parents to become active in an effort to change their schools.

Information from *Doing community-based research: A reader* by D. Murphy, M. Scammell, and R. Sclove. See "References" at the end of ***Community Action***.

Chili Peppers vs. Guns

Before the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, Mexican-Americans in New Mexico were treated in ways very similar to Black people living in the segregated South. At the Empire Zinc mine, there were two lines to stand in to receive a paycheck, "Anglo-American Males," and "Other Employees." The more dangerous underground jobs in the mine were given to Mexican-Americans. They were paid less than the Whites who worked above ground.

In 1950, the union at Empire decided to strike. Demands included paid holidays, an end to separate and unequal conditions like the toilet facilities, and equal wages.

The negotiations were unsuccessful, and the strikers created a picket line to keep the mine closed. But the mining company had the support of the local and regional government. After seven months, a court order was handed down making picketing by union members illegal.

Until then, the wives, mothers, and sisters of the miners had helped the union by planning social events like bingos, dances, and enchilada dinners. Now they had the chance to play a different role. They were not actually union members, so it was not illegal for *them* to picket, and they did. Their picket line prevented non-union workers from getting into the mine, as they chanted "*No les dejen pasar.*"

After a few days, the county police attacked the picket line, throwing tear gas into the women's faces. Forty-five women and 17 children were arrested, including one 29 day-old baby. These 62 women and children were put into a jail cell built to hold 20 people. They were offered the chance to go home if they agreed to stop picketing. Virgina Chacón recalls, "we all responded at the same time: we would not go home; we would go back to the picket lines."

Still, they were released from jail. The police violence increased, with beatings and police cars being run straight into picket lines. As Marianna Ramirez remembers, "Everybody had guns, except us. We had knitting needles. We had safety pins. We had chili peppers. We had rotten eggs."

The women continued picketing for another seven months. The company met with the sheriff , and they decided to end the strike with even more violence. Several cars were driven into the picket line, seriously injuring three of the women. Even after this, the women refused to quit.

Finally, negotiations began again. The miners won a large increase in wages, health insurance, holiday and vacation pay, and other improvements in working conditions. And they learned that women could do far more than make enchiladas.

information from *Roots of justice: Stories of organizing in communities of color* by J.R. Salomon. See "References" at the end of ***Community Action***

Handout

References

Murphy, D., Scammett, M., and Sclove, R. 1997. *Doing community-based research: A reader*. Amherst, MA: The Lakota Institute and Knoxville, TN: Community Partnership Center.

Salomon, J.R. 1998. *Roots of justice: Stories of organizing in communities of color*. Berkeley, CA: Chardon Press.

Women at the North Quabbin Adult Education Center 1997. *Getting involved in community issues: Yes, you can make a difference*. Orange, MA: The Literacy Project Site in Orange, MA.

Sharing What We've Learned and Evaluating Our Work

Sharing the Knowledge Gained

A critical part of any project that creates community, school, or workplace change is sharing what was learned and accomplished with other grassroots groups. The women of the North Quabbin Adult Education Center (see the victory stories at the end of ***Community Action***) wrote a manual about their campaign to get public transportation in their town. These women wanted to illustrate how people involved with community-based adult education programs could work on specific issues together and why they should do so; show some of the activities they used in their efforts; and reflect on what gains they were able to achieve in their community. The parents of *Padres Unidos* (also in ***Community Action*** victory stories) took the information they collected through research on bilingual education and created skits and workshops to educate other parents. Your group, or some of its members, may also want to consider sharing pieces of what you learned with others who need the same knowledge.

What We Have Achieved

Before leaving the work to which *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action* has led you and your students, ask yourselves the following four questions, meant to encourage a deepening of the skills you've gained, act further on the knowledge you've acquired, and solidify the community your class has become.

1) The goal of *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action* was to help students:

- identify the issues of concern
- raise questions about those issues
- share the knowledge and expertise they already have
- get the answers they still need.

It also provided strategies for taking action.

How did we do?

2) What are the new skills we've gained? Which skills need additional practice?

To expand your lists, you may want to go over the following EFF skills.

Communication Skills
Read with understanding
Convey ideas in writing
Speak so others can understand
Listen actively
Observe critically

Interpersonal Skills
Guide others
Cooperate with others
Advocate and influence
Resolve conflict and negotiate

Decision-Making Skills
Plan
Solve problems and make decisions
Use mathematics in problem solving and communication

Lifelong Learning Skills
Use information and communications technology
Learn through research
Reflect and evaluate
Take responsibility for learning

3) How have you used the new information you learned? What is there still to do?

4) Has your belief in your ability to create change increased?

Resources

Educating Our Children

Bickert, T.S.; Dodge, D.T.; and Jablon, J.R. 1997. ***What every parent needs to know about 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades***. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc.

Examples and ideas to help parents evaluate the quality of their child's instruction, and advocate for better quality when they need to.

Cantor, R. 1997. ***Days of respect: Organizing a school-wide violence prevention program***. Alameda, CA: Hunter House.

Step-by-step instructions for putting together an event that brings students, parents, teachers, and community leaders together to create an atmosphere of respect in school so everyone can feel safe.

Cholden, H.; Friedman, J.A.; and Tiersky, E. 1998. ***The Homework Handbook: Practical advice you can use tonight to help your child succeed tomorrow***. Illinois: Contemporary Books.

Test-taking strategies, methods for improving study habits, and ways to provide enriching experiences in math, social studies, science, language, and the performing arts.

FairTest. ***Standardized tests and our children: A guide to testing reform***. Order from FairTest, 342 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139. (617) 864-4810. $4.

Easy-to-read guide to standardized testing, including what it is, why it doesn't work, and alternative methods of evaluation.

Houston READ Commission. ***Building a bridge: Linking families and schools***. Order from HRC, 5330 Griggs Road, #75, Houston, TX 77021. (713) 228-1801.

Provides 20 lessons for encouraging parental involvement in their children's schooling.

Lee, E.; Menkart, D.; and Okazawa-Rey, M. 1998. ***Beyond heroes and holidays: A practical guide to K-12 anti-racist, multicultural educational staff development***. Washington, DC: Network of Educators on the Americas. NECA, Post Office Box 73038, Washington, DC 20056. (202) 588-7204.

An interdisciplinary guide that includes lesson plans and staff development activities for anti-racist, multicultural education. Also examines critical issues such as bilingual education, parent/school relations, and tracking. Request a catalog for additional resources.

National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS). 1993. ***Achieving the dream: How communities and schools can improve education for immigrant students***. Order from NCAS, 100 Boylston Street, Suite 737, Boston, MA 02116. (617) 357-8507. $10.

Looks at many of the issues standing in the way of academic success for immigrant students – including teacher expectations, retention, the failure to address racism and inadequate support services. Documentation of the problems, and steps to create positive change.

National Coalition of Advocates for Students. 1994. ***Delivering on the promise: Positive practices for immigrant students***. Order from NCAS, 100 Boylston Street, Suite 737, Boston, MA 02116. (617) 357-8507. $18.95.

Information on innovative programs and practices across the country that are working to improve school outcomes for immigrant students.

National Coalition of Advocates for Students. ***Selected readings from CHIME (Clearinghouse for Immigrant Education)***. Order from NCAS, 100 Boylston Street, Suite 737, Boston, MA 02116. (617) 357-8507.

Annotated list of readings that can be ordered from CHIME. Includes numerous articles on school restructuring, immigrant parent participation in schools, confronting racism in schools, and articles specifically written for Latino parents.

National Coalition of Education Activists. 1992. ***Maintaining equity: A background packet on tracking and ability grouping***. Order from NCEA, Box 679, Rhinebeck, NY 12572. (914) 876-4580. $4 includes shipping and handling.

Designed as an organizing tool to teach about tracking and motivate action for change. Articles include "Algebra for All 9th Graders," and "Should Schools Eliminate Gifted and Talented Programs?"

National Coalition of Education Activists. ***Community organizing: The missing piece in school reform?*** Order from NCEA, Box 679, Rhinebeck, NY 12572. (914) 876-4580. $2 includes shipping and handling.

Argues that a community organizing model, based on an understanding of power issues, is needed to achieve significant school change.

National Council of La Raza. 1998. ***Latino education, status and prospects: State of Hispanic America 1998***. Washington, DC: NCLR.

This is the fifth in a series of statistical reports on Hispanic education by the National Council of La Raza. It provides statistical information on the state of Hispanic education in the United States, along with demographics on the Hispanic community. Against the backdrop of a quickly growing Hispanic community, the report shows that there is an urgent national interest in improving the educational attainment of Latino students.

National Council of La Raza. 2000. ***Becoming an advocate for Latino students: A community guide for improving the education of our children***. NCLR, 1111 19th Street NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC: 20036. Available early 2000. To receive NCLR's Publication Guide (free of charge) with publications ordering information, call (202) 785-1670.

Provides and explains important Hispanic education statistics, including high school completion rates and academic achievement. Gives an overview of what the Goals 2000 Act means for Latinos. Also includes a sample checklist of education issues, the basic elements of an appropriate education for Latino students, the eight characteristics of a multicultural school, and the basic student entitlements. The guide addresses issues relevant to community advocates, such as developing a plan of action, talking to youth, using effective work strategies, getting to know the school, dealing with school bureaucracy, communicating with the media, getting the community involved, and forming an advocacy group.

National Council of La Raza. 1996. ***Academia del pueblo curriculum***. NCLR, 1111 19th Street NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC: 20036. 430 pages; $30 plus shipping and handling. To receive NCLR's Publication Guide (free of charge) with publications ordering information, call (202) 785-1670.

Part of the Project EXCEL series, the Academia del Pueblo curriculum presents an after-school academic enrichment model designed to help at-risk elementary students get a good start in school. (Project EXCEL, an academic enrichment model, was developed at demonstration sites in 46 communities across the country.) Lessons incorporate principles of second-language acquisition and cooperative learning techniques in a culturally-appropriate context. The curriculum is designed to be implemented by local, community-based teachers, para-educators, and volunteers. Curriculum highlights include Cultural Links in each lesson to emphasize that children's learning occurs in the context of family and community and Parent Links to involve parents in children's learning by making a connection between what is learned in the classroom and home experiences. Bilingual (English and Spanish).

National Council of La Raza. 1999. ***Academia del pueblo: math and science (ADP-MAS) Curriculum***. NCLR, 1111 19th Street NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC: 20036. $45 plus shipping and handling. To receive NCLR's Publication Guide (free of charge) with publications ordering information, call (202) 785-1670.

Part of the Project EXCEL series, ADP-MAS aims to increase and strengthen informal math and science education opportunities for Hispanic elementary school students. ADP-MAS is designed to be implemented by community-based teachers and para-educators in collaboration with neighborhood schools. Curriculum highlights include Nuestro Mundo Creativo (Our Creative World) work stations, which feature connections between the lessons presented and the arts. Literature Links connect math and science to stories, poetry and picture books, and Parent Links tie home experiences to classroom learning. Bilingual (English and Spanish).

National Council of La Raza. 1998. ***Project success***. NCLR, 1111 19th Street NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC: 20036. 870 pages; $65 plus shipping and handling. To receive NCLR's Publication Guide (free of charge) with publications ordering information, call (202) 785-1670.

Part of the Project EXCEL series, the Project Success curriculum presents an after-school academic enrichment and career model for at-risk adolescents. Law-related education (LRE), in the context of citizenship in a constitutional democracy, is the central focus of this curriculum. Students will be exposed to constitutional, consumer, and housing law, as well as some aspects of criminal law. The curriculum is designed to be implemented by community-based teachers and para-educators in collaboration with neighborhood schools so that communication with the students' school counselors is provided for. Bilingual (English and Spanish).

Nicolau, S. and Ramos, C.L. 1998. ***Together is better: Building strong partnerships between schools and Hispanic parents***. Order from Hispanic Policy Development Project, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 901, Washington, DC 20036. (202) 822-8414.

Highlights the elements of successful parent involvement programs for the schools.

Philadelphia Public School Notebook. 3721 Midvale Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19129. (215) 951-0330. $12/year. Parents/Students: $7/year.

A quarterly newspaper committed to reaching a grassroots audience and to promoting quality and equity in the Philadelphia public schools. Its news and analysis, and information on activism and effective school practices, is valuable to people everywhere working for urban school reform.

Philadelphia Public School Notebook. Spring, 1999. Issue pull-out, ***College Resource Guide***. Public School Notebook, 3721 Midvale Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19129. (215) 951-0330.

Spanish/English guide to what students need to get from high school to college. Includes classes to take, and tests to register for.

Political Research Associates. Undated. ***Activist resource kit***. PRA, 120 Beacon Street, Suite 202, Somerville, MA 02143. (617) 661-9313.

A guide to resources for challenging the political Right's attack on public education, and the ways it fits into a larger assault on democracy and pluralism. Highlights the issues of school vouchers, bilingual education, and charter schools.

Refugee Women's Alliance. 1992. ***Family talk time: A curriculum for refugee and immigrant parents***. Order from New Readers Press, 1320 Jamesville Avenue, Box 888, Syracuse, NY 13210. (800) 448-8878. $15 includes shipping and handling.

Among the issues addressed are raising children in the U.S., understanding American schools, and changing family roles in the U.S.

Rethinking Schools. 1001 East Keefe Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53212. (414) 964-9646. $12/year.

Independent national newspaper advocating school reform. Stresses a grassroots, activist perspective with an emphasis on issues of equity and social justice.

Rethinking Schools. Spring, 1997. ***Funding for justice: Money, equity, and the future of public education***. Order from Rethinking Schools, 1001 East Keefe Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53212. (414) 964-9646. $8.50 includes shipping and handling.

Offers an accessible look at the allocation of financial resources in public schools, arguing for more equitable distribution.

Savitzky, F. 1994. ***Bilingual children: A guide for parents and carers***. Order from Peppercorn Books and Press, Box 693, Snow Camp, NC 27349. (336) 574-1634. 6.60 includes shipping and handling.

Includes suggestions that encourage bilingualism among children, including speaking maintaining the home language and English.

Our Working Lives

Auerbach, E. R. and Wallerstein, N. 1987. ***ESL for action: Problem posing at work***. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

An ESL curriculum for workers set in the context of problem solving in the workplace, with an emphasis on education for change.

Becker, A. 1997. ***Immigrant rights: An ESOL workbook***. Chicago: Travelers and Immigrants Aid.

Written as a reading and conversation text or as a core text for an English as a Second Language content course on immigrant rights. Highlights such topics as the rights of undocumented workers, discrimination against immigrants, sexual harassment, and domestic violence.

Bigelow, B. and N. Diamond. 1988. ***The power in our hands: A curriculum on the history of work and workers in the U.S.*** New York: Monthly Review Press.

Focuses on the contributions of ordinary people – "the hired hands" – as builders and creators. Highlights instances where people acted together to change their conditions.

Colette, M.; Woliver, B.; Bingman, M.B.; and Merrifield, J. 1996. ***Getting there: A curriculum for people moving into employment***. Order from Peppercorn Books, Post Office Box 693, Snow Camp, NC 27349. (877) 574-1634.

Combines personal reflection with research into local job and training opportunities, and practice of job search skills.

Gillespie, M. 1996. ***Learning to work in a new land: A review and sourcebook for vocational and workplace ESL***. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

A review of materials from both research and practice dealing with adult immigrants' preparation to work in the United States.

Gordon, J. 1991. ***More than a job: A curriculum on work and society***. Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press.

An alternative to "life skills" curricula, which the author defines as accepting "as a given the conditions that people find themselves in." This Adult Basic Education curriculum encourages students to examine those conditions and the assumptions behind them.

Hemphill, D.; Pfaffenberger, B.J.; and Hockman, B. 1990. ***The working culture, Volume I: Cross-cultural communication for new Americans.*** Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Activities encourage students to discuss ideas and attitudes related to work in the U.S. in comparison with their previous experiences.

Labor Education Center. Undated. ***Workplays***. LEC, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, 285 Old Westport Road, North Dartmouth, MA 02747. (508) 999-8007. $65 includes shipping and handling.

Video with a problem-posing approach to workplace rights. Topics include safety and health, workers' compensation, discrimination, and unions. Accompanying workbook includes language development activities.

Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health. 1992. ***Confronting reproductive health hazards on the job: A guide for workers***. MassCOSH, 555 Amory Street, Boston, MA 02130. (617) 524-6686.

Accessible guide defines reproductive hazards, and provides advice on how to control them; legal rights; and strategies for worker action.

Nash, A. and Wright, P. 1991. ***A curriculum packet about immigration-related job discrimination***. Order from Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), Anti-Discrimination Project, 178 Tremont Street, Boston, MA, 02111. (617) 357-6000 x 229.

Designed to give ESL teachers the information and tools they need to help students counter job discrimination.

National Council of La Raza. 1999. ***Job readiness tool kit***. NCLR, 1111 19th Street NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC: 20036. To receive NCLR's Publication Guide (free of charge) with publications ordering information, call (202) 785-1670.

The Job readiness tool kit is a unique resource for community-based job readiness programs serving Latino youth and adults. Lesson plans guide instructors through culturally-relevant, interactive exercises for job training workshops or entire courses. Lessons use worksheets, discussions, research, interviews

with peers or mentors, role-plays, group projects, presentations, self-assessment exercises, and games. The Tool Kit addresses: Getting Started and Motivated; Self- Assessment and Promotion; Job Search and Selection; Applying for the Job; Getting Ahead in the Workplace; Problem-Solving At Work; and Career Planning. The Tool Kit was made possible by a grant from the Coors Brewing Company. Available in both English and Spanish.

New England Literacy Resource Center. September, 1998. ***The Change Agent***. The Changing World of Work issue. Order from World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. (617) 482-9485. $5/annual subscription.

Addresses labor history, women's work, unions, health and safety, immigrant workers, and more.

Resource Center of the Americas. 1995. ***The new global economy: A view from the bottom up***. Resource Center of the Americas, 37 Seventeenth Avenue SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414. (800) 452-8382. $85 plus $7 shipping and handling.

A workshop/game, including video, which explains transnational corporations and "free trade" in easy-to-understand terms. Participants simulate a struggle that erupts when a firm announces it will close a factory based in the US to move to Mexico.

Simon, R.; Dippo, D.; and Schenke, A. 1992. ***Learning work: A critical pedagogy of work education***. South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey.

Theory and practice for a critical (progressive) exploration of work. Poses questions to encourage reflection on the social origins of many assumptions made in the field of education.

United for a Fair Economy. ***The activist cookbook: Creative actions for a fair economy***. United for a Fair Economy, 37 Temple Place, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02111. (617) 423-2148. $16 includes shipping and handling.

A hands-on manual for activists and artists. Examples of and ideas for creative actions to liven up meetings, campaigns, media events, and more.

United for a Fair Economy. ***Too much***. United for a Fair Economy, 37 Temple Place, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02111. (617) 423-2148.

Quarterly newsletter offering a range of articles and resources for those who want to learn more about the US economy and the issues of wealth inequality.

United for a Fair Economy. 1998. ***Wage gap organizing kit***. United for a Fair Economy, 37 Temple Place, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02111. (617) 423-2148. $6 includes shipping and handling.

Organizing resource focused on the Income Equity Act (H.R. 67). Contains fact sheets, postcards, graphics, tips on working with other organizations, background articles, and sample press releases.

Zaniello, T. 1996. ***Working stiffs, union maids, reds, and riff-raff***. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press.

Annotated guide to more than 150 films about working people and labor activism. Focus is on popular films, with some documentaries included.

Worker Owned and Operated website: http://incolor.inetnebr.com/dennis/coop.shtml. Links to the history of worker collectives, educational centers, books, and listings of worker-owned business around the world.

Community Action

Bobo, K.; J. Kendall; and Max S. 1991. ***Organizing for social change: A manual for activists in the 1990s***. Order from Highlander, 1959 Highlander Way, New Market, TN 37820. (423) 933-3443. $19.95 plus shipping & handling.

Covers everything from identifying community issues to developing strategies, running meetings, and fundraising. Anecdotes about a wide variety of efforts toward community change.

Brown, C.R. 1990. ***The art of coalition building: A guide for community leaders***. American Jewish Committee, 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022. (212) 751-4000. $3.50

Includes a chapter on building unity across ethnic, religious, and class lines.

Ferreira, E.C. and Ferreira, J.C. 1997. ***Making sense of the media: A handbook of popular education techniques***. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Examples of lessons and worksheets useful in helping students develop a critical sense of the media.

Center for Popular Economics. 1996. ***The war on the poor: A defense manual***. Center for Popular Economics, Post Office Box 785, Amherst, MA 01004. (413) 545-0743.

Provides facts, figures, and inspirational stories community groups can use to resist punitive welfare reform proposals.

Gonzalez, R. Undated. ***Enfoque comunitaro: A guide to community empowerment through civic participation***. Order from National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund, Nuestra Comunidad, 5800 S. Eastern Avenue, Suite 365, Los Angles, CA 90040. (213) 720-1932.

User-friendly guide to U.S. citizenship, voting, and accessing elected officials.

Highlander Research and Education Center. ***A very popular economic sampler***. Order from Highlander, 1959 Highlander Way, New Market, TN 37820. (423) 933-3443. $25 plus shipping and handling.

Provides information on issues of economic justice in down-to-earth terms, as well as activities for classroom use.

Murphy, D.; Scammell, M.; and Sclove, R. 1997. ***Doing community-based research: A reader***. Order from The Loka Institute, Post Office Box 355, Amherst, MA 01004. (413) 559-5860.

Case studies and articles about community-based research efforts, including those that have created grassroots AIDS knowledge which challenges traditional boundaries of science, and research for creating a neighborhood economic development plan.

New England Literacy Resource Center. February, 1998. ***The Change Agent***. Civic Participation issue. Order from World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. (617) 482-9485. $5/annual subscription.

Covers a wide range of topics, including anti-racism, voting, and connecting math to community needs assessment.

North Quabbin Adult Education Center. 1997. ***Getting involved in community issues: Yes, you can make a difference***. Order from The Literacy Project, c/o Central School, 34 North Main Street, Orange, MA 02164. (978) 544-8917.

A manual of activities and reflections from a group of women who saw the need for public transportation in their community.

Osborne, J. 1991. ***My community***. Order from Peppercorn Books, Post Office Box 693, Snow Camp, NC 27349. (877) 574-1634.

Exercises through which to explore neighborhood issues.

Salomon, L.R. 1998. ***Roots of justice: Stories of organizing in communities of color***. Order from Highlander, 1959 Highlander Way, New Market, TN 37820. (423) 933-3443. $15 plus shipping and handling.

Takes a historical look at organizing for social justice. Among other stories, it includes those of the Zoot Suit Riots, Salt of the Earth Strike, welfare organizing, and Brooklyn parents' struggle for community control over the local schools.

Schreiber, T. and Martin, R. 1996. ***Other colors: Stories of women immigrants teaching kit***. Order from Other Colors, Post Office Box 4190, Albuquerque, NM 87196. $20 for individuals, $35 for institutions (includes postage).

Audio interviews with women immigrants from Central America, the Caribbean, Cape Verde, and elsewhere. Topics covered include race and identity, education and employment, changing family relationships, and organizing against domestic violence. Activities in the teachers' guide turn the programs into a tool against racism, using reading, writing, discussion, and research.

Shields, K. 1994. ***In the tiger's mouth: An empowerment guide for social action***. Order from New Society Publishers, Box 189, Gabriola Island, BC, Canada VOR 1XO. $19.45 includes shipping and handling.

Provides ideas for healing burnout, improving listening skills, and enhancing the joy of working for change. Addresses often neglected aspects of community organizing.

Simons, J. and Jablonski, D.M. 1990. ***An advocates guide to using data***. Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund. Order from Clearinghouse for Immigrant Education (CHIME), 100 Boylston Street, Suite 737, Boston, MA 02116. (617) 357-8507.

Designed to help those who do not have a background in statistics. Provides guidance in selecting, analyzing, and presenting data to support advocacy efforts.

Survival News. 102 Anawan Avenue, West Roxbury, MA 02132. (617) 327-4219. $10 for individuals, $25 for organizations. Free to low/no income people. Bulk rate of $1 per issue for classroom use.

A Spanish/English newspaper published by low/no income people working to change the welfare system. Information about benefits and rights, and a forum for the voices of low/no income people.

Alternative Assessment

Faculty, Staff and Students of the University of New Mexico-Valencia Campus Adult Education Center. 1997. ***Authentic assessment for New Mexican adults: A collaborative process***. UNM-Valencia, 280 La Entrada, Los Lunas, NM 87031. (505) 925-8900.

Materials and tool educators anywhere can use for initial assessment and to evaluate student progress without the use of standardized tests.

Fingeret, H.A. 1993. ***It belongs to me: A guide to portfolio assessment***. Order from Peppercorn Books, Post Office Box 693, Snow Camp, NC 27349. (877) 574-1634.

Carries the reader through five stages of portfolio assessment, a method of evaluating student progress.

MacKillop, J. 1994. ***Whole language for adults: A guide to initial assessment***. Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press.

Provides information to make holistic evaluations of students' reading and writing proficiency, oral communication, and other issues that may impact their participation in your program.

Schneider, M. 1997. ***Phenomenal changes: Stories of participants in the portfolio project***. Order from Peppercorn Books, PO Box 693, Snow Camp, NC 27349. (877) 574-1634.

Tells the story of Literacy South's three-year portfolio assessment project, in the words of its participants.

Schneider, M. and Clarke, M. 1999. ***Dimensions of change: An authentic assessment guidebook***. Order from Peppercorn Books, PO Box 693, Snow Camp, NC 27349. (877) 574-1634.

Theory and practice of authentic assessment, which include an interactive guide to help teachers develop their own assessment systems. Appendices contain other assessment tools.

TESOL Journal. Autumn, 1995. Special issue on Alternative Assessment. Order from TESOL Publications, P.O. Box 753, Waldorf, MD 20604, (888) 891-0041. www.tesol.edu/pubs.

Related Materials

Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women. 1996. ***Making connections: Literacy and EAL curriculum from a feminist perspective***. Order from CCLOW, 47 Main Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4E 2V6. (416) 699-1909.

Intended for mixed gender adult literacy and "EAL" (in Canada, this means English-as-an-additional language) classrooms. Covers such topics as safer sex, women's history, and gender roles.

Nash, A.; Cason, A.; Ruhm, M.; McGrail, L. and Gomez-Sanford, R. 1992. ***Talking shop: A curriculum sourcebook for participatory adult ESL***. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Overview of participatory teaching, including group dynamics, the use of native language literacy, and evaluation. Also specific ideas for building curriculum around immigrant concerns, and issues for mothers and children.

Organizational Resources

American Association for Counseling and Development
5399 Stevenson Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22304
(703) 823-9800

Works on multiple issues including education, mental health, and family issues. Promotes the counseling and human development professions.

American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
1801 North Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 528-0700

Focuses on parenting skills, early childhood education, child care, drug and alcohol abuse, AIDS, teenage pregnancy, and "students at risk."

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 879-4434

As the second largest teachers' union, covers all topics that concerns teachers and schools, including restructuring of schools.

ASPIRA Association, Inc.
1444 Eye Street, NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 835-3600

Helps Latino youth and their families to decrease dropout rates, develop mentoring programs, and increase Hispanic parental involvement in schools. Publishes a quarterly newsletter and other user-friendly materials in English and Spanish.

Census Bureau State Data Center Program
Data User Services Division
Washington, DC 20233
(301) 763-1580

Provides referrals to state and local data centers that can have access to local-level data from the U.S. Census.

Center for Law and Education
955 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 876-6611

Assists parents in advocating on behalf of their communities for quality public education, especially in regards to Chapter/Title 1. Provides referrals to local legal services and education advocacy groups.

Council of Chief School State Officers (CCSSO)
400 North Capitol Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-1511
(202) 393-8159

Strives for equitable, high quality education for the nation's public school students, regardless of sex, race, national origin, or disability. Develops conferences and publications on youth issues including teen pregnancy.

Council of Great City Schools
1413 K Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 371-0163

Promotes the improvement of education in the largest urban public school districts in the U.S. through research, legislation, advocacy, and special projects.

Equipped for the Future Standards for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning (EFF)

For EFF materials, contact Publications Coordinator Kevin Brady at kevin.brady@phila.gov. To be part of conversations with programs implementing EFF, join the EFF listserv. Send message to listproc@literacy.nifl.gov. Leave the subject blank. Message should read: subscribe NIFL-4EFF firstname lastname.

Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 353-3309

Works with member schools to get parents and families involved in identifying and addressing problems that face schools and the children they serve.

Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350
San Antonio, TX 78228
(512) 684-8180

IDRA advocates the right of every child to a quality education, and has worked for excellence and equity in education for more than 20 years. IDRA conducts research and development activities; creates, implements, and administers innovative education programs; and provides teacher, administrator, and parent training and technical assistance.

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
221 North Kansas, Suite 1200
El Paso, TX 79901
(915) 577-0726

LULAC is the oldest Hispanic organization in existence today. The LULAC constitution stresses U.S. citizenship, acquisition of the English langaugage, improvement of educational and economic opportunities, maintenance of cultural heritage, extension of political and civil rights, and opposition to school segregration.

Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF)
634 South Spring Street, 11th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90014
(202) 628-4074

Through litigation, community education, and leadership development, MALDEF works toward its primary objective: to protect and promote the civil rights of Lations livings in the United States.

Multicultural Education Training and Advocacy (META)
524 Union Street
San Francisco, CA 94133
(415) 398-1997

Focuses on immigrant and linguistic minority students; provides counseling and training to parents and activists; organizes parents into multiethnic coalitions for change, and litigates on behalf of poor and minority students' rights.

National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)
1012 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-4000

Seeks to strengthen state leadership in educational policy making, to promote excellence in education, to advocate equality of access to educational opportunity, and to assure continued citizen support for public education.

National Center for Education Statistics
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20208-5641
1-800-424-1616

Sponsors conferences for teachers, parents, and policymakers; publishes research studies and the OERI Bulletin; provides training to teachers and administrators through 10 regional centers.

National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity & Second Language Learning Bilingual Research Group
University of California, Santa Cruz
399 Clark Kerr Hall
Santa Cruz, CA 95064
(408) 459-3500

Conducts research and publishes newsletter, Focus on Diversity, which provides information on bilingual education and second language learning.

National Coalition of Education Activists
Box 679
Rhinebeck, NY 12572
(914) 876-4580.

Network of parents, school staff, union and community activists, teachers, and children's advocates. Provides support and resources to its members, who share a commitment to multi-cultural and anti-racist practice, cross-constituency dialogue, and a belief that the struggle for better schools is part of a broader struggle for social justice. Membership benefits include newsletter, Action for Better Schools; access to information bank which helps find speakers, trainers, and audiovisuals; and technical and financial support for local activities.

National Education Association (NEA)
1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-7727

Largest teachers' union in the U.S.; conducts research, awards grants, and publishes magazine, NEA Today.

National School Boards Association (NSBA)
1680 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22304
(703) 838-6742

Dedicated to advancing and achieving excellence in education through local control of the nation's public schools.

National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)
1220 L Street, NW, Suite 605
Washington, DC 20005-4018
(202) 898-1829

Founded in 1975 to address the educational needs of language-minority students in the U.S. and to advance the language competencies and multicultural understanding of all Americans. Through research, professional development, public education, and legislative advocacy, NABE pursues the implementation of educational policies and practices which ensure equality of educational opportunity for all Americans and advance US interests in an era of global interdependence and competition.

National Center for Fair and Open Testing (FairTest)
342 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 864-4810

Campaigns for elimination or reform of standardized testing at all levels of education. Provides activists with materials for organizing testing reform efforts in their communities.

National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS)
Clearinghouse for Immigrant Education
100 Boylston Street, Suite 737
Boston, MA 02116
1-800-441-7192
NCASMFE@aol.com

Offers parents, teachers, and students information on legal rights, bilingual education, students support services, multicultural education, and other topics. Some materials are available in Spanish.

National Coalition of Education Activists (NCEA)
P.O. Box 405
Rosendale, NY 12472
(914) 658-8115

A multiracial organization of parents, teachers, union, and community activists, NCEA works to promote equity and fundamental education reform; provides information and helps activists around the country stay in touch; sponsors parent institutes and an annual conference.

National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education
The George Washington University
1118 22nd Street NW
Washington, DC 20037
1-800-321-NCBE

Publishes program information guides, occasional papers, and the newsletter Forum.

National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE)
900 Second Street, NE, Suite 8
Washington, D.C. 20002-3557
(202) 408-0447

Builds coalitions for public school reform. Publishes numerous resources, including a newsletter – Network for Public Schools – pocket guides, brochures, and books on parents' rights, school-based reform, and parent involvement. Also runs two hotlines for questions concerning citizen involvement in schools: 1-800-NETWORK (English) and 1-800-LE-AYUDA (Spanish).

National Parent and Teacher Association (PTA)
700 North Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2571
(312) 787-0977

Provides information to parents and Parent and Teacher Associations on building home-school relationships, developing parenting skills, improving learning at home, and promoting parent-child communication. Single copies of many resources are free and some are available in Spanish.

National Puerto Rican Coalition (NPRC)
1700 K Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 223-3915

Uses its network of more than 100 community-based organizations to develop programs in advocacy, research, and public policy; enhance the image of Puerto Ricans in the U.S.; and conduct partnership programs in community economic development.

Network of Educators on the Americas (NECA)
P.O. Box 73038
Washington, D.C. 20056
(202) 238-2379

NECA's mission is to promote peace, justice, and human rights through critical, anti-racist, multicultural education. NECA publishes a catalog of anti-racist, multicultural education materials and offers speakers, seminars, and staff development workshops.

Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA)
Mary E. Switzer Building
U.S. Department of Education
330 C St., SW, Room 508
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 205-5463

Manages federal discretionary grant program (Title VII, the Bilingual Education Act) for local school districts and institutions of higher education.

Office of Civil Rights (OCR)
U.S. Department of Education
Mary E. Switzer Building
U.S. Department of Education
330 C St., SW, Room 508
Washington, DC 20202

Monitors public school compliance with federal regulations.

Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI)
Office of Policy and Planning
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, Room 3127
Washington, DC 20202-8240
(202) 401-1958

Conducts evaluation, policy analysis, and research in all areas of education, including Title VII, the Bilingual Education Act.

Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF)
99 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10013
(212) 219-3360

PRLDEF is a national civil rights organization that ensures Puerto Ricans and other Latinos receive equal protection under the law. This is accomplished through litigation, advocacy, and creative legal education programs. PRLDEF also works to increase the number of Latino attorneys serving the community.

Right Question Project
2464 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 314
Cambridge, MA 02140
(617) 492-1900

Develops educational strategies that help people build skills to get involved in issues that affect them. Programs prepare people to more effectively advocate for themselves, participate in decision-making processes that affect them and their families, and hold decision-makers and decision-making processes accountable. www.rightquestion.org. Publications list available Fall, 1999.

NCLR
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

1111 19th Street, N.W., Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036

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